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# LAYS OF THE LINE,

AND

OTHER POEMS.

INSPECTOR AITKEN,
ST ENOCH'S STATION, GLASGOW,
AUTHOR OF "RHYMES AND READINGS."



JOHN MENZIES & CO., EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW. 1883. DUNDEE: PRINTED AT THE WEEKLY NEWS OFFICE.



## PREFATORY NOTE.

25 Brougham Street, Greenock, January, 1883.

In placing before my Readers this little volume of "Lays of the Line," I might venture the opinion that, of all other occupations either on land or sea, that of the ordinary railway employé is by far the most hazardous. The Railway Benevolent Institution Casualty List for 1882 shows no fewer than 125 of its members killed and 2015 injured on railways during the year, and this number, large though it may seem, gives, I am sorry to say, but a very faint idea of the total of railway workers killed and injured on the different systems during the twelve months. Almost every newspaper we lift has its railway accident of some kind or other to chronicle. These short paragraphs give, however, but scant details of the many sad cases that are occurring almost daily. Many of them have little histories of their own that never reach the ear of the general body of travellers whose very lives are, as it were, dependent on the watchfulness and care of this attentive and energetic band of Keeping this fact in view, I have endeavoured, in a very imperfect way it may be, to string into rhyme a few of the more important cases that have occurred in my own experience, and which I hope may not be without some little interest to the general body of my Readers.



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## LAYS OF THE LINE.

#### CONVICE JIM.

IM MACDONALD, reared an arab, 'mid the

Ragged, starved from very childhood, trained in all the arts of sin,

Sleeping on the cold stairs nightly, when he missed a running in.

Mother, never knew he any; Biddy Burk, of whom you know,

Toss'd him to the world one morning, suckled him a month or so,

But the law had claims on Biddy, o'er the seas she had to go.

Father—well, he might be called one—many a wretch has worn the name—

Worn it only for a mantle from the world to hide his shame—

Such a one had Jim MacDonald—father, villain, all the same.

In a drunken midnight revel, when the air with curses rung,

On a helpless fellow-mortal out his brutish nature sprung;

Retribution followed quickly, tried, convicted, sentenced, hung.

Like his father, like his mother, so was Jim for very long,

Following in their awful footsteps, ever waxing stout and strong.

In the arts of crime an adept, versed in every sin and wrong.

Posted up in all its branches, every day he defter grew,

Swore as much as any twenty, drank as much as any two,

Till he won his spurs and wore them, leader of the lawless crew.

Till one night, in pitchy darkness, rose the sounds of signal strife,

Fighting like a frenzied madman, in his rage he grasped a knife,

And the blow he dealt in darkness cost a fellow-man his life.

Blood for blood, though stern-eyed justice prest her victim close and keen,

Mercy, sunny-browed and sinless, placed her shielding arm between;

Fourteen years was all they gave him, hanged they said he should have been.

Came a change, his eyes were opened, tortured by remorse's stings.

Eager sought he peace and found it, pardon came on healing wings;

Ten long years he lived and laboured, yearning after better things.

Home again, he sought the city, eager to live honest now,

Though a felon, he would labour faithfully, he cared not how,

But the curse of Cain was with him, deeply branded on his brow.

None would have him when they knew him fresh from out a gloomy gaol,

Till one kindly-hearted stranger, who had learned his mournful tale,

Used his influence in his favour, found him labour on the rail.

Where he came from, who his friends were, never one of us could tell,

All we knew, the lad was honest, knew his work, and did it well,

- Ne'er a word unseemly spoken from his lips in anger fell.
- When he'd run as second-brakesman on the goods a year or more,
- Jack, he said to me one evening, when our daily toil was o'er.
- And he told me all his story, never told to man before.
- Sad and sorrowful he gave it, but it was not ended here.
- He had known a city maiden, known and loved her for a year,
- Then in whispered tones he told me that the happy day was near.
- Only one thing gave him trouble, he had never let her know
- How his early life was wasted, spent among the vile and low;
- Would he go at once and tell her? Sternly, I made answer, No!
- Well it was he did not do so; ere had closed another day
- All the sunshine of her being suddenly was swept away,
- Darkness black as night and deeper round about and o'er her lay.
- Shunting on the homeward journey, something tripped him by the heel,
- Down he dropped among the waggons, scarcely time to think or feel,
- Onward came the grinding engine, o'er him passed the crushing wheel.
- Silently she bore her sorrow, silently she bears it still.
- Gazing back into the darkness, with its leaden load of ill,
- But she never knew his story, with God's help she never will.

## HEVER THE ACCIDENT.

Man old man, yes, I am, sir, something over sixty-one;

I've been close on forty years about the place, But there's no use making faces, now the mischief has been done;

Age and service don't go far in any case.

I have tried to do my duty, and so far have done it well.

But the sharpest man will sometimes make a fall. It is few you'd find, I fancy, who have wrought so long a spell

With not a single failing in it all;

It is not so much the prospect of the jail that me annoys:

No, nor yet the vile remarks one overhears:

Nothing pains me so as parting with the dear old corduroys

That have clad me now for more than thirty years.

For one train, when first I started as a pointsman, now there's ten;

Everything is done in quite another style;

We'd no tall and towering semaphores to watch our welfare then

Distant from the cabin nearly half a mile.

We'd a strange old-fashioned signal not a hundred yards away,

That took all the strength one had to make it turn,

With one green and two red dials showing signals through the day,

And a dim old lamp at night that would not burn;

Many a life that started with me has been crushed out long ago;

Many a dear one's eye has filled with bitter tears;
Many a sad and mournful story it has been my lot
to know

Since I started, which is more than thirty years.

They have altered things completely from the good old-fashioned way;

With their ringing bells and gongs and other things,

And they ring them all together, till I'm blest if you can say,

Which of them, the "up" or "down" it is that rings.

There's been many a young hand started, stout and sharp-like in the main,

Likely looking lads, so far as one could see,

But their smartness quickly left them when they got behind a train,

Or were caged up in a signal-box like me;

And no wonder they got muddled, such a weight on mind and brain,

It is not the simple work it all appears;

I should have some little knowledge of its pleasures and its pains,

Having pulled the levers now for thirty years.

Many a time I've thought when closing with my senses dull'd and numb,

And my very arms and fingers strained and sore, After eighteen hours on duty where's the good in going home.

I'd have almost rather stood the twenty-four; Then you could have toppled over when the closing

bell was rung,

And awoke in time the opening ring to hear:

As it is my arms get shaky, and my nerves get quite unstrung,

And an everlasting whistle fills my ear;

Not a single soul to speak to all the eerie drearie day,

All alone I sit and nurse my slavish fears,

For this "No admittance" order keeps my very friends away,

Though I've been a pointsman more than thirty years.

That my brain was getting muddled it took no great skill to tell:

I was getting less expert in mind and limb;

My ears were getting heavy, and I could not hear so well,

And my eyes were getting colourless and dim.

But so long as they said nothing I was eager to remain,

I was bound to earn an honest crust somehow; Once you're out it's no small matter finding work to do again,

With the frost of sixty winters on your brow.

Yes, resign! I've often thought so in my darker hours, but then—

Rung the all important question in my ears—

Did you ever know of railways giving pensions to their men

Though they'd wrought without a slip for thirty years?

There is no great labour in it, yet when trains are coming throng

We are sometimes sorely puzzled what to do,

And for any small detention or when anything goes wrong,

It's a common thing to put the blame on you.

There is scarce a single clear one all our crowd of men among,

All in time must make their little smash and go; I have reason to be thankful that I managed through so long.

It is what I knew would happen long ago.

Many a shaky hour and minute in this grim old box I've passed,

Every day and every night I had my fears

That my spell of luck would leave me; I have made a smash at last

After sailing clear for over thirty years.

And it came about so sudden and so very simple too,
I had nothing but the late express to come:

But I never saw it better when you're wanting early through,

Or had set your mind on getting sooner home.

Twas that old slow-coach, Tom Jackson, at his flukey tricks again,

You'd to watch him like a weasel night and day; He had only reached the crossing and was coming round his train.

When I thought he'd cleared the section right away;

And I went and drew my signals for the Mail and knew no more

Till the thud and crash came ringing in my ears;
And an accident had happened where there ne'er
was one before,

With a pointsman on the road for thirty years.

And is this a prison really? No! I'm buried in a tomb,

Stone above, beneath, around, roof, floor, and walls;

Only one small starlike window peering down upon the gloom

Where no glow of golden sunlight ever falls.

God! this stillness is oppressive, it will wear me out ere long,

Even now my mind is wandering; I can feel
The floor beneath me shaking; I am perched once
more among

My polished levers gleaming clear as steel;

And the iron monster rushes like a meteor through the air,

And his piercing whoop is ringing in my ears;

Back again I stand a pointsman in the grim old cabin where

I have wrought the traffic safe for thirty years.

#### WIDOW MORGAN.

ND she's gone, poor Widow Morgan, to the Poorhouse after all,

Gone to die a helpless pauper, propped against its cold damp wall,

Better far, had God so willed it, death had made his destined call.

All those years of toil and labour, ceaseless labour spent in vain,

Weary days of constant working, eerie nights of constant pain;

Life, was't really worth the living, was there anything to gain?

Eighteen years ago John Morgan, coming homeward from the mine,

In the dark was struck and mangled, as he made to cross the line,

By an empty pilot engine coming off the steep incline.

Friends he had, but what about them, none of all his kith and kin

Ever lent a hand to help her, more than it had been a sin;

Like a slave she toiled and struggled, wore out life to keep it in.

Sickness came and sorrow with it, now at toil and now in bed,

Still she trusted, still she triumphed, to her credit be it said,

All those eighteen years she nobly kept a house above her head.

Came the fever, and the children one by one were taken ill;

One by one they drooped and faded, busy went her needle still:

One by one she laid them decent in the churchyard up the hill.

All but he, her last and youngest, blue-eyed, laughing little Jim,

Like a very hare he scampered, light of foot and lithe of limb,

All the life that left the others seemed to concentrate in him.

Time went on, and old age hoary dimmed her eye and dulled her ear,

But with Jim to watch and tend her nought of trouble did she fear:

She grew weak as he grew stronger, till he reached his twentieth year.

Slowly, quietly, wearing downwards, moving thro' life's final stage,

She had been his all in childhood, he would be her all in age,

To her faithfully he carried, week on week, his hard-won wage.

First, a lad with book and parcels, through the town his toil he plied,

Then a porter on the platform, yardsman, pointsman all allied,

Last, he wrought the Junction cabin, near to where his father died.

There he sat and did his duty, caged aloft and bird alone.

Sending up and getting signals from Tom Cruikshanks further on;

He and Tom were very brothers, long they had each other known,

Till they both got into trouble, how Jim never could explain.

Some mistake was made between them in the signalling of a train;

Both were fined a day, and cautioned never to offend again.

Fined! Jim did not take it kindly, fined for what, he could not tell.

Some confounded screw or other had got loose about the bell.

Fined! for such a paltry trifle, he who'd wrought so long and well.

Fined, he thought, while many a shadow flitted o'er his mind and brow:

Never since he started labour as a parcel lad till now Had she missed a single shilling, he must make it up somehow.

And he did, when she had thought him slumbering peacefully in bed,

He had slipped away unnoticed to a night of toil instead,

To a night of busy labour in the noisy transfer shed.

Backward promptly in the morning to his signal work again,

Wearied out, and dull and heavy with the long continued strain,

Now and then a drowsy numbness creeping o'er his eye and brain.

Up against the dreamy monster all the day he bravely bore,

Never in his whole experience had he felt so press'd before.

Till he could no longer battle, down he sat and toppled o'er.

Scarce a minute had he slumbered, when the shricking whistle blew.

Up he sprung in dreamy blindness, pulled a lever ere he knew;

Heavens! the hapless lad had shifted number three instead of two.

Then the piercing wail of anguish rose upon the calm, still air,

From a hundred helpless victims, maimed and bruised, and bleeding there—

Strong-toned voices breathing curses—weak ones meaning in despair.

Down the quiet old street they took him, as the shades of evening fell;

Through the prison gates they bore him, he whom they had known so well;

"Poor young lad!" the stony warder muttered, as he locked the cell.

Twixt poor Jim and Widow Morgan miles of sea now intervene,

Want comes peering in the window, no kind helper comes between;

All her hopes in life were shattered, when he smashed the four-fifteen.

And she's gone, poor Widow Morgan, to the Poorhouse, after all-

Gone to die a helpless pauper, propped against its cold, damp wall—

God of heaven, help the helpless, when life's night begins to fall.

## THE MANIAC'S STORY.

ORNING, sir, I am glad to meet you; no offence was meant at all;

Only thought that I, when passing, might do worse than make a call.

I'm no ruffian though I look it—friends we'll yet be, never fear:

You re the new appointed "gaffer" come to take the section here.

So I thought, and that's the reason why I've spoken out so free;

"Like to like," you know the proverb, here is true for once, you see.

I was "gaffer," same as you are, long ago before your day,

When this Branch was but a narrow curvey strip of single way,

Full of facing points and crossings, full of nasty twists and strains,

Only good for killing workmen, only fit for smashing trains.

I'm a maniac! yes, I am, sir; shunned alike by wives and men,

Inmate of the Deepdale Union every little now and then,

Where in fits of frenzied ravings, chained and bound
—a woeful sight,

Live I through again the horrors of that dreadful bygone night,

When a bit of careless working filled two homes with death and gloom,

Turning all my after lifetime to a very living tomb;

In which being faints and flickers, loth to leave its tiny hold,

Waiting for the truant senses to relight its chambers cold.

And they are returning slowly back to life and light again,

Like the sun-glints of the morning from the weary night of rain,

After all the gloom and sorrow, after all the weary war.

After half a lifetime's darkness, deep as death and blacker far.

Better days may dawn upon me, but they ne'er can bring the glow

Nor the hallowed heavenly brightness of those mornings long ago.

Life had then a bliss and sweetness that it never can have now;

Oh! to think how all was shadowed—listen and I'll tell you how.

I was "Boss"—I think I told you—on this length the same as you,

Only I had fewer workers; you have six, I'd only two.

Tear and wear was easy managed—all our trouble chiefly lay

When some old abandoned working underneath the line gave way.

Then 'twas march with pick and shovel, all the same by day or night,

Scarcely time a crust to swallow till the place again was right.

Do you see the old bank yonder curving off beside the mill?

Made to work the Limestone Traffic from the old mine up the hill;

You can see the wide gap in it where the moorland burn runs through,

In those days a grim old gangway, railed and sleepered, joined the two.

All unchanged by time the brooklet runs and ripples still between,

But of all its grim old timbers not a single plank is seen.

Nothing heavier that I know of ever crossed it in my time,

Than our boggie-track with metals or a three-ton load of lime;

But the sleeper hut's still standing, built by Billy Briggs and I,

In those days the place was known as "Gaffer Giffin's ballast lye."

There we kept our stock of odd things, used for doing up repairs,

Such as rails and blades for switches, spikes, and bolts, and keys and chairs,

As a store the place was handy, we had found it so for long,

Every day on earth we used it, never anything went wrong;

Till we did it once too often, that wet autumn after noon.

Either we had toiled less smartly, or the night had come too soon,

In our hurry, mid the darkness, never could tell how or why;

Home we went and left the switches fastened for the ballast lye.

'Twas my duty to have seen them, but benumbed with cold and rain,

I'dforgot to set and lock them for the single line again; Such a nasty place for switches never could you wish to know,

'Twas a siding that should have been closed and lifted long ago.

Two hours later down the Moorland "Hunter's" train came driving on,

Never knew they ought about it till the awful wreck was done:

"Hunter," you have heard about him, driver of the local train,

Every morning, every evening, down the Branch and back again;

Every morning, every evening, to a moment sharp and sure.

He and young Bob Blyth, his stoker, rattled up and down the moor.

Everybody seemed to know them, long the jolly pair had run

Down and up the old branch railway with their grim old "ninety-one."

Such a shaky, rough old engine never dragged along a train;

Not an inch of shelter on her from the stormy wind and rain.

Jack could put her to her metal, all about her strength he knew,

And could tell you to a waggon what the black old dame could do.

From her rugged, rakish funnel how the sparks would flare and fly,

Till the glare was red reflected far above her on the sky;

Always running to a minute, till the simple country folk

Set their clocks and watches to him—Hunter's train was eight o'clock.

I'd a son then, first and only, dearer to me far than life,

Given as a parting token of affection by my wife,

'Neath my watchful care he'd grown up stout of heart and strong of limb,

And I'd pictured something better than a railway life for him;

But his heart was with the engines, nothing else he cared to know,

And though sore against my wishes, I'd at length to let him go;

Stoker on the shunting pilot was the post he went to fill, Brothers could not love each other more than they did, he and Bill.

Well, that night, as I have told you, on came "Hunter" with his train,

Heedless of the pitchy darkness, heedless of the storm and rain;

All unfearing, unsuspecting, on they came with clank and din,

Nothing knowing of their danger till the engine jolted in,

Till she reached the Bridge, whose timbers underneath her creaked and bent,

Ere they snapped, and men and engine down into the water went.

There the guards found poor Jack Hunter, bruised and blistered, on the plate;

He had closed his regulator and reverse !, but all too late.

When the glimmer of their hand-lamps on his smoke-grimed face was cast,

Something seemed to say within them that his driving days were past.

Close beside him lay the stoker, all unharmed by fall or steam,

Only caught and wedged in firmly by a heavy timber beam.

"Right!" he whispered, when they asked him, "if my leg was only free.

Hurry off with Jack and help him; after that attend to me."

And, the fools, they went and did it; half-an-hour was spent in vain—

Half-an-hour of bootless labour; Hunter could not live again.

All the while the flood was rising, creeping round the poor lad's form,

All unheeded and unnoticed, in the darkness, 'mid the storm; For the wreck had dammed the water, and had all

but stopped its flow— Every moment creeping higher, awful sure but

awful slow.

Quiet and patiently he waited, with no thought at all of fear;

One strong pull of willing workers, and his leg would soon be clear. And they came and crowded round him; eagerly they pulled at him;

But their labour all was bootless; fixed and swollen was the limb.

Pulled they till the joints and sinews seemed to crack beneath the strain—

Till the poor lad swooned and fainted, overcome with cold and pain.

Then the hardy miners gathered from their huts beyond the hill

Bearing lights, and picks, and shovels, strong of heart, and hand, and will.

"Cut an outlet for the waters through the bank," a strong voice cried;

Fifty picks and fifty shovels, driving through the earth, replied.

Each one with the strength of twenty plied his toil with ceaseless din.

Stepping out in turn exhausted, fresher workers stepping in.

Who stood round them, ready, waiting, eager every blank to fill;

But the harder that they laboured, higher rose the waters still.

Mad to 'whelm their hapless victim, silently they hemmed him in,

Till his arms were under water, then his neck, and then his chin.

High above the noise and bustle ever rose his wailing cry,

"Save, oh, save me from the waters. Lift me help me ere I die!

Hold my head," he moaned, imploring; "hide-oh, hide it all from me!"

And they bound a napkin round him, that the flood he might not see; And they gathered round about him, terror-stricken,

spe chless, dumb, Waiting for the awful closing; but the end was

waiting for the awill closing; but the end wai

Every second seemed a minute—every minute seemed an hour.

Help he prayed for, help they could not; such was not in mortal's power.

Through their hearts like poisoned daggers went his every wail and moan,

Yet they stood, like helpless infants, mute and soulless, gazing on,

Till stern nature, foiled and baffled, fought till she could fight no more,

Came the last convulsive gurgle, and the weary strife was o'er.

Then it was those strong-arm'd toilers, striving fierce the tide to turn,

Through the broad bank cut a passage, found an outlet for the burn,

Vain, alas, their mighty labour, bootless now for good or ill,

All the sinking waters left them was the dead, but 'twas not "Bill;"

And they ran and quickly raised him, cold so soon, it scarce could be,

Past all human aid and succour, dead, and what a death had he.

Would to God I'd done my duty, gone and laboured with the rest,

Twould have made the flame less scorching that consumes my brain and breast;

Leave the place I tried, but could not, something kept me hovering near,

Peering eager through the darkness, listening with a greedy ear,

I could see the picks and shovels glancing in the lurid light,

I could hear the poor lad's wailing wafted to me through the night,

But I dare not venture near him, No, I could not bear to see

That wild look of awful import, his large eyes would fix on me;

Like a robber in the darkness, there I hid my form away;

Like a coward, I fied the battle, when I should have led the fray;

Not till all was past and ended did I dare to venture nigh,

Heaven! oh, what an awful picture met an erring father's eye.

What an end to all my hoping, what a cloud on all my joy,

In the cold, dead form before me, I beheld my hapless boy.

Was it all a ghastly vision, was it real, and could it be?
Was it only some dread nightmare, with its iron sleep on me?

No, 'twas real, I stared in horror, God! above me, what is this?

And my soul went sinking downward to a fathomless abyss.

Sense, and sight, and thought, and feeling, from that awful hour were gone,

And they led me home a maniac, cold and soulless as a stone;

Nothing see I with my vision, all is pitchy dark as night,

Nothing but the rising waters ever comes before my sight,

And I cannot move a muscle, chained in horror and despair,

With the dead face of my darling gazing out upon me there.

Did I raise a single finger to assist him in his fight?
Oh! the blood of my poor lost one cries unto me here to-night.

I'ma maniac, yes, I am, sir, and the fits are coming on, I'll be chained, and raving wildly, ere another day has gone;

Glad I am you've listened to me, though the story gives me pain,

It has eased the awful pressure crushing through my blood and brain.

#### THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

ES, I ran away from home, sir, just when entering on my teens.

I had longed for railway bustle, with its everchanging scenes;

But I found in time 'twas something c'se than flowers and evergreens.

Spoiled in boyhood, to begin with, I grew wayward, heedless, wild,

Unrestrained and unrestricted, up to manhood from a child:

Everything that savoured goodness I most scornfully reviled.

Knocked about I was a trifle, as all railway hands must be:

But I knew my work, and did it, creeping slowly up the tree,

Till the Blankton stationmaster left; his place was offered me.

I was far too young, I know it—far too green for such a place;

Such a heavy charge as Blankton I was very loth to face,

But the pay was something handsome; money alters many a case.

Keep the books, collect the charges, meet the trains as they were due,

Keep an eye on yard and station—everything, in fact, to do—

Were the duties they expected from a lad of twentytwo. Night and day continual bustle—endless toil it seemed to be—

Never breathing time a minute, never from the duties free;

Older men with more experience would have failed, the same as me.

All the things in office-working I could rattle lightly o'er—

Work the telegraph and cabin; all of these I'd done, and more;

Eut a "single Line" was something I had never tried before.

When the "up" "Night-Goods" was heavy, and got late to save delay,

'Twas the rule for Bogstone Junction man to wire us up and say

That their work was done, and get our leave e'er it could start away,

Till one evening, busy poring o'er my month's outstanding list,

Legs, and arms, and neck, and body getting many a turn and twist.

All was vain; it would not balance; some confounded thing was missed!

Tom, the lad who watched the needles, came across to let me know

That the goods was right at Bogstone. Would he block her? I said "No!"

At the moment, quite forgetting, we had let the "local" go!

Pausing half-a-minute later, through my brain it crashed and cleft.

"Stop that message, boy!" I shouted. All too late
—the goods had left!

Then I sought the platform wildly, like a man of mind bereft.

Gone the "local" too! Great Heavens! I could see her tail-lights still

- Disappearing in the distance, where the line curved round the hill,
- Then a darkness gathered round me, heavy charged with coming ill.
- All was done so quick, so simple, by the scratching of a pen,
- By the signing of that message, how my brain burned in me, when
- All the fearful scenes I pictured, how the trains would meet, and then,
- Twixt the office and the platform, like a maddened fool, I flew,
- Twenty times in twenty seconds, what I did I scarcely knew—
- Send for doctors now, and coffins, nothing else was left to do.
- Half-a-dozen willing workers on their ghastly errands sped.
- Ordering succour for the living, ordering trappings for the dead,
- In the wreck that was to happen some five miles or so a-head.
- Came the crash, or was it fancy to my ear the strange sound bors?
- Well I knew its dreadful import, all was done, the worst was o'er,
- Then a mist rose up around me, down I fell and knew no more.
- Long the iron slumber held me, days, and weeks, and months flew by,
- Vacant-eyed, bereft of reason, living, none cared how or why,
- Till the scorching fever left me, light returned to brain and eye.
- Vain, ah! vain, were Mercy's pleadings, Justice must, and did prevail,
- Though a bruised reed and broken, all uncared for, helpless, frail,

From the fever ward they bore me, like a felon, to the jail,

In whose damp and dismal darkness, like a guilty thing I lay,

Till they brought me up for judgment, guilty, what else could I say,

Half the town were gathered, ready, there to swear my life away.

Hats, with bands of crape, were common, widow's weeds were strangely rife:

Scarce a home but had its victim killed outright, or maimed for life;

Here a woman mourned a husband, there a husband mourned a wife.

Then they read the charge against me, strongly worded, clear, and cool;

Nothing but a careless worker, nothing but a very fool,

Could have, even for a moment, gone again so clear a rule.

What a punishment they gave me, 'mong the dregs of earth to roam,

Ten years in some convict prison, miles away across the foam,

While a brute, red-dyed with murder, got nine months to stay at home.

But 'tis over now, thank Goodness, I've paid well for my mistake;

Years I've spent among the roughest and the vilest crime can make;

Sad and sore the recollections which those memories do awake.

Back again I am, however, full of hope, with nought to fear;

Back to those bright scenes of boyhood, hid for many a weary year—

Yonder is the dear old dwelling, half a mile or so from here.

Yonder, I can see my mother, gathering wreckage in the bay,

Sore she's changed, I hardly know her, dear old soul, she'll hear to-day

How the lad she spoiled with kisses was not drowned, but ran away.

## JACK WOODS.

O I mind Jack Woods, the brakesman? Yes, if any should, I ought;

As his second on the long road many a cheery shift I wrought,

As a shunter, sharp and active, full of watchfulness and care :

You will never find his equal on a railway anywhere.

We've had some rare hands, I grant you; but a heart more kind and good

Never laid his poor bruised body 'mong the slumbering multitude.

I can also well remember how, the day before he died.

As we started on our journey he came over to my side:

Says he, "Bill, we've run as mates now on this road a pretty while;

In our outs and ins together we've gone over many a mile;

Yet our luck has never left us; we've got alway safely through,

While many an older hand's got fixed, and many a young one too;

But our time will come for certain—how, or when we cannot say.

- Like the dogs you hear them sing about, each guard 'will have his day.'
- No matter how we watch her, or how strong and well we feel,
- We'll be tossed, and crushed, and done for by the turning of a wheel;
- So, if anything should happen, Bill—excuse me speaking plain,
- But you're next in turn for charge, you know, and would take up the train—
- You will find in my old jacket, in the corner of the chest,
- A letter from my brother Tom, who years ago went west.
- He has made his pile of dollars, and has took it in his head
- Some little debt he owed me once has never yet been paid,
- And, knowing I'm contented with my present roving life,
- He has settled something handsome on my little ones and wife.
- Will you take the letter to her, Bill? She has not seen it yet.
- I just got it from the postman on the street before we met."
- I laughed the while I promised at his strange and solemn face,
- And vowed that in a pulpit yet he'd fill a parson's place.
- I tried my best to cheer him up, and drive his fears away.
- "You surely do not mean," I said, "to die right off to-day?
- And, what's more, we're not prepared just yet to let you take the shelf;
- So keep the letter, Jack, and live to take it home yourself."
- We had less to do than usual at the stations up the hill;
- Not a signal stood against us—we were sharp to time—until

We had reached the Redstone quarries, where we stood six hours no less,

Through a breakdown in the tunnel, to the Liver-pool Express;

She'd been running close before us, till the breaking of a chain

That secured some heavy timber in the middle of the train.

Filled the arch from top to bottom, blocking both the "Up" and "Down,"

With a world of bales and boxes on their way from town to town:

Rails were twisted, sleepers broken, wheels had snapped like paper rings—

While the coupling chains had parted like as many rotten strings.

When the single line was opened, after half a day's delay,

We had two more hours' detention letting "Green Board" trains away.

Charley Chapman was our driver, not the fastest, not the best-

But his engine was a duffer, and had long been underprest;

He could not have made a minute even had he felt inclined,

It was therefore little wonder we got hourly more behind.

When we reached our destination and the train was off our care,

'Twixt our coming in and going we had but one hour to spare;

There were spare guards to relieve us, who'd have taken on the train,

But we did not care for waiting and brought back our run again.

All went smoothly on the journey till we passed the single line,

And had stopped to put off traffic on the Breckinhill Incline;

We'd a train of forty waggons, I'd gone forward to the front,

At the last place where we lifted, to be sharper with the shunt.

When the driver shut the steam off as the station we drew near.

I cut off, expecting Jack would put the break on in the rear;

Put the waggons in the sidings waved the driver back again,

And leaped on the tender buffers to attach it to the train.

Wildly stared I through the darkness, what? oh! mercy, could it be?

Not the glimmer of a side-light, not a waggon could I see;

Then the awful truth flashed through me, and my very heart stood still,

At the scenes my fancy pictured darkly edged with coming ill;

Then a shadow crossed my vision, like the changes of a dream,

And I shouted, but the echoes only answered back my scream.

Overcome at length, and weary with the long and toilsome day,

Jack had dozed into a slumber and the train had run away,

On the wrong road, backwards rushing, of his danger unaware,

Oh! what fearful wreck and ruin if the next train met him there.

Would the pointsman at the quarries shift the points and run him through?

Ah! vain hope, the speedy London was already overdue;

Then I shouted to the driver, while my face with terror glowed,

Leaping wildly on the engine as he dashed her through the road;

Down the hill she came like thunder to her very utmost prest.

We had life and death before us, and we did our very best;

From the funnel blazed the cinders, lighting up the sky with glare,

While the eerie shricking whistle woke the startled midnight air,

But 'twas bootless, all was over ere our race had well begun.

All the wreck we feared and dreaded had been terribly done;

When we saw it and had stopped her, red and smoking from her race;

Oh! what fiends of desolation seemed to stare us in the face;

Hopeless ruin, like a river, spread before us wild and wide;

Wheels and waggons, beams and buffers, filled the cut from side to side;

Here an engine, half demolished, like some grand old tumbled tower,

Not a single trace remaining of its mightiness and power;

There a tender, bent and broken by some wild Titanic fling,

From its rugged side and riven plates the water trickling;

Both the driver and the stoker, when they saw the tail lights near.

Had leapt off, and, save some scratches and a nasty fright, got clear;

But poor Jack was killed; we found him with no trace on him of pain;

All unconscious he had slumbered till he met the other train.

Did I find the letter? Yes, sir, and I have it with me still;

I had everything to settle up, his poor wife took so ill;

Long 'twixt life and death she lingered; she was weak for many a day,

Then she rallied, and his brother came and took them all away:

And they've asked me out so often to the back-woods where they dwell;

But they won't excuse me this time—they have paid my fare as well.

Though I've always liked the railway, with its endless rush and ring,

I've made up my mind to leave it, and go out there in the spring.

#### WHO IS SHE?

HO is she? Don't you know her? She's a lady born and bred;

Yon's her mansionhouse you see beside the hill,

There she lives a lonely widow—husband, children, all are dead.

Since the night that Tommy Temple made the spill,

When he over-ran the signals, now a dozen years ago,

And rushed right into the mail and smashed her wild,

There's a weird, strange look about her to a man who does not know,

Yet she flits about as harmless as a child.

Every morning with her carriage she comes regularly down

To drive her husband and the children home.

But the flowers have decked the woodlands, and the fields grown bare and brown,

And she's waiting still, and still they do not come.

Not a single day she misses. Promptly at the hour of ten

Must she have the carriage waiting at the door, Where she's always drossed and ready. To the train and back again

She has driven now a dozen years and more, And the waggon for their luggage she must order

every day;

No matter how, it must be waiting there,

And she never leaves the station till the train has gone away.

Gazing round her with a weird, expectant stare, Not till all the crowd of passengers have hurried out and gone,

Not till hushed is all the noisy stir and hum, Does she think of going homeward, when, with sadness in her tone,

She will speak and say, "How strange they have not come."

And I always answer quietly, as I tell her o'er again

That same old tale I've told her now so long,

They'll be coming in the morning, they have only missed the train,

They'd have sent her word had anything been wrong.

Then her eyes will gleam a second with a strange, contented glow,

And the glassy film will blind them up once more, And she'll mutter as she leaves me that she hopes it may be so.

But she never knew them miss the train before.

And I'll see her to the carriage, and before I shut
the door

She will hand me from her purse a tiny sum,
And I'll get the same quiet order that I've got so
oft before

To assist them with their luggage when they come.

I never will forget the shock that thrilled me through and through

When the message came that told us of the spill,

But no word came to my Lady from her husband, and I knew

That his silence on the subject boded ill.

With sweet Rose and May, his daughters fair as blooming flowers in June,

With his first-born hope, his eldest only son,

He was travelling next the engine in a splendid new saloon

When the smash was made that killed them everyone.

All that dreary day she waited, hoping eager but in vain,

All the night long too she lingered pale and dumb, Gazing out into the darkness for the long-expected train;

Letter far for her if none had ever come.

But it came at last, and brought her all her dear ones bruised and dead.

What a sight for wife and mother's eye to see;

Reason lingered for a little—then from all her being fled,

And she passed into the gloom that was to be.

Down she sunk upon the platform with a strange unearthly sigh,

And a clammy chill crept o'er her face and brow; When we raised her up we noticed in her once bright cheery eye

The same dull, vacant stare that's in them now.

All the glorious gladsome sunlight of her happy life was gone.

A helpless harmless maniac went she home;

But before she left the station she cried over to me, "John,

You'll assist them with the luggage when they come."

What a shriels was that! My Lady's? Nay, it surely cannot be,

She was standing here beside us even now; Yes; oh God! struck down and bleeding in the four-

foot way was she,
'Mong the carriages she stumbled in somehow.

She'd been searching more than usual, peering into every pane,

In a bootless quest for what we could not tell;

And had no doubt seen a vision of her dear ones in the train,

And had made a rush to reach them ere she fell. Dead! those eyes, though still within them was

that same dull leaden stare,

God had thought it meet to call his wanderer home;

And she's gone to join her dear ones in those happy mansions where

They've been waiting all those years till she would come.

### **РИММУ МІГТОМ**.

EAF and dumb, a strange weird figure, Dummy Milton stalked along,

Horny-handed, dark, and swarthy, brawnymuscled, hale and strong;

Not a steadier, surer toiler ever wrought our ranks among.

Busy at his post of duty many a day his form was seen,

Where the bridge with one great archway spans the wooded valley green,

Near the two great redstone quarries with the railway through between.

Twenty years upon the surface toiled he for his daily fare,

Now far in the half-mile tunnel to the flickering oil-lamp's glare,

Now upon the high embankment in the purer, clearer air.

Always hunting after something, always ferretting about,

Many a failure missed by others Dummy Milton pointed out,

Laughing ever at our blindness with his strange half squeak and shout.

In our gossip with his fingers Milton always had his say.

Puffing like some human engine as he toiled the live-long day,

Ever grunting, ever talking in his strange and harmless way.

Warning? No! he never needed—rains might beat and winds blow high,

Some strange instinct told the Dummy always when a train was nigh,

What he lacked in speech and hearing he had gained in brain and eye.

Sharp by day, the same by darkness, morning grey, or twilight dim,

Many an old, experienced driver, oily-fingered, smoky, grim,

Vowed there never was an engine steaming that could injure him.

Ever first to leave the four-foot clear for an approaching train,

Never last when she had passed him to resume his toil again.

Heaven knows what a world of fancies must have filled his dreamy brain.

Many a higher-gifted mortal, many a fellow-worker there.

Almost swept down ere they knew it, by some engine unaware,

Owed their very life and being to the watchful Dummy's care.

Dummy Milton, in his younger days, had won and wed a wife;

Love it must have been that brought her there to share his silent life;

E

Hand in hand they bravely battled through life's weary toil and strife.

For a helper and companion Providence had sent her there:

And she did her duty, bless her, tending him with love and care:

Not a tidier-dressed and cleaner than the Dummy anywhere.

When her first sweet babe she bore him, came he in with mutterings queer,

Lifted up the tiny sleeper, placed it on the table near;

Then with hammer struck the table close beside the infant's ear.

How the rosy dreamer wakened, startled wildly with the fright;

How the father, when he found its valued sense of hearing right,

Took it in his arms and kissed it, dancing round in wild delight.

Killed at last was Dummy Milton, on that dismal, dreary day,

When a dull, dark, misty mantle over hill and valley lay;

When Bill Baxter let the waggons down the wrong line run away.

Round the curve into the cutting like a flash of light they swept,

Where the Dummy and his fellows at their posts of duty kept;

One wild shout by all together as they out for safety leapt.

Onward rushed the waggons past them, in their wild, terrific run;

All had leaped for life and saved it—all got clear away but one:

Crushed and bleeding in the four-foot, Dummy Milton's work was done.

Dummy Milton, many a stranger stops and kindly asks for him;

Many a kindly heart grows saddened, many a tender eye grows dim,

When we tell them how we found him, torn and mangled limb from limb.

Who'll provide for Widow Milton now the faithful Dummy's dead?

Who will put a ray of sunlight into all the gloom a-head?

God-who feeds the hungry ravens; He will give his children bread.

# IN THE INFIRMARY.

O! you over there in the corner, what makes you so woefully bad?

As if none but yourself on the surface of this old earth of ours should be sad;

What's the use of this howling and groaning? are you anything worse than the rest?

The man who meets troubles light-hearted is the man that gets over them best.

It is not of your own self you're thinking—it's your heart, not your head, that is sore;

Got a wife and four children to work for, then you ought to keep up all the more;

Lost a leg when engaged at the harvest with a rickety reaping machine,

Not a crush with a sixty-ton engine—just a cut with a knife quick and clean.

You've been luckier far than I fancied, keep up heart and you'll quickly get through—

Not a man in the ward that I know of has less cause to make faces than you;

I'm surprised to observe you so tender and so down in the mouth; look at me—

Not your age by a half-dozen summers, and yet in my time I've lost three.

Cannot be? Yes, it can; on the railway three times in my day I've been hit:

If you'll listen I'll tell you my story—it may raise up your spirits a bit.

Raise yourself, if you can, on your elbow, wipe that nasty damp sweat from your brow;

Never think of your troubles—that's better, you look a bit pleasanter now.

Twelve years or so past I was working a surfaceman down in the West,

I was out going over the section a good bit away from the rest,

Where the single line branch to the Lead Works strikes away through the woods to the East,

From the Junction points down to the cabin 'twas a full hundred yards at the least.

'Twas a stormy wild day in December with some nasty showers going about,

It was more to be full in the pay-sheet than for anything else we were out;

Tom Jones was on shift in the cabin—Tom was guilty of doing things rash,

He was sacked only some two weeks after for causing the Muddleby smash.

Twas my work to examine the switches to see they were proper and clean—

I had done so and found a hard whinstone wedged firmly and surely between,

And had put in my foot to remove it that the blade might get close to the rail,

When the pointsman away at the cabin drew them over to let through the Mail.

Through the Mail? Yes, I saw her approaching, and a cold chill went through me like joe:

Though I shouted and screamed all was bootless, I was held by the foot like a vice;

I could see her huge form in the distance, something less than a half-mile away;

What occurred in the next thirty seconds I never could very well say.

I can only remember I shouted, every shift to get clear did I try.

But the grasp of a giant was on me, not a soul ever heeded my cry;

I can only remember of seeing the great snorting thunderer near,

And of laying me down in the four-foot and of keeping my other limbs clear.

On she sped like a flash through the junction, every wheel as it passed I could see,

Then a blank came, and when I recovered, they had took my leg off by the knee;

I was young and light-hearted, however, and got over my trouble right quick,

Though for surface work crippled and done for, I'd to throw down the shovel and pick.

But the Company looked to my welfare, had they not 'twould have gone with me hard,

And they sent me up here to be checker, and ook after the work in the yard;

And I might have continued to do so in the same way for many a year,

Had not blind Billy Briggs with his pilot knocked me down and again sent me here.

In the yard with his old Hawthorn engine, as he shouts, shunts, and rattles away;

He's a rough driver too, is he, Billy, he has knocked off a few in his day,

And to take my good leg it was shameful, 'twould have pleased me'a mighty deal more

Had he run his wheels over my wood one as was done not so long since before.

But I'm not the least dull nor despondent, as soon as I'm able and fit.

I have never been starved that I know of, they will find me a tidy job yet; What, die in a ditch kind of dog-like I have no such intention at all—

No, as long as they're things they call crutches, I don't mean to go to the wall.

Keep our hearts up and sing while we're able is the very best thing we can do,

I have danced for twelve years upon one stump, I might dance other twelve upon two;

While for chilblains, for corns, and for bunions I will get along nicely without,

And a man whose got no understandings need have little to fear from the gout.

But my third leg I have not yet told you. Coming home one dark night through the lyes,

I'd been thinking and dreaming of something, and my ears were asleep with my eyes,

When the engine that shunts the branch traffic coming sharp round the curve in my rear,

Gave me such a swift blow with the buffer that down I went luckily clear.

I had just got a new stump that morning in the place of my noisy old peg,

Twas so well made you could not have known it from a good working natural leg;

When I fell it lay right on the metals, on past me the old engine flew.

Not a scratch had I got in the tumble, but my new leg was cut right in two.

I was stunned for a time, and some fellows coming up where I lay got a fright,

When they found my leg off and me senseless, they thought I was done for outright;

So they bound the leg up in the trousers, and secured it as firm as it would,

Got a board and away to the doctors, they conveyed me as fast as they could.

No blood on the stump nor the bandage, nor yet on the ground at the place,

That the fracture was bleeding internal was the verdict they passed on the case,

As they hurried along with their burden to the town at a wondrous rate,

Never stopping nor resting a minute lest the doctor should see me too late.

When at length they got there and had laid me in the room at the back of the shop,

The sweat stood like beads on their faces, with fatigue they were ready to drop;

Came the man of the pills and the powders with an ominous shake of his head,

What, a leg taken off on the Railway? It's a very bad business, he said.

"Just so;" they replied, "was run over, and we fancied the best thing to do

Was to get him put on to a stretcher, and brought down with all speed unto you;

He's a worker up there at the station, a hard-working, well-doing man;

We will see you are paid for your service, and we know you will do what you can."

By this time I was back to my senses, and feeling myself pretty right,

I got up on one leg right before them, and I gave them a deuce of a fright.

"What's the meaning of all this confusion,"
I shouted as soon's I could speak;

"You have given me such a vile shaking, my bones will be sore for a week."

"Oh, do you lie down," said one softy, "your leg has been took off to-night,

But we've brought you down here to the Doctor's, and he'll very soon put you all right."

"Leg be hanged," I exclaimed to the Doctor, "as if Doctors could do any good,

It's the Joiner next door that I'm needing—he will make me another of wood."

When I unstrapped the belts and the fixings and displayed them my broken-down pin,

How the old Doctor laughed long and hearty at the way they'd been all taken in;

Though my friends joined the fun and seemed jolly
I could see by the looks they let fall,

They'd have just been as pleased had my good leg been the one that was off after all.

#### PEY YER WEY.

ICKETS ready—tickets, please, sir, jumpin' oot and jumpin' in,

Never hauf a meenit's ease, sir, frac we start till we hae din:

Fast Express and Mail and Local racin' up and chasin' doon,

Stuck-up swell and country yokel hurryin' tae and frae the toon.

If ye should, and them tae ken o't, let yin pass nae maiter whae,

Never wad ye hear the en' o't till yer vera deein' day;

Slaughtered wad ye be instanter, up they'd hing ye like a drum,

Thro' the gate ye'd need tae canter, "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

When for pleasure or diversion duty as clear quarter spares,

Some confounded Cooke's Excursion draps in on us unawares;

Some red-boarded "Engine follows" spoils the best hauf-hour we hae,

We wad leave it "hollos-bollos" had we class tae rin away.

But we havena, there the nerve is jagged as wi' an ether's stang,

Naked cam' ye tae the Service, naked frac't ye'll need tae gang; Tuggin', tearin' huggin', harlin' a' to earn an honest crum'.

Ever quizzin', ever quarrellin', "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Courtesy is never shown us either frae man's mouth or pen,

Mony a loosey trick's played on us by yer fine-faced gentlemen;

Hat and coat sair worn and seedy, waistcoat, breeks, and boots the same,

Skinny-featured, gapin, greedy, beggars a' but in the name.

Tips they're no the breed to gie ye, harder sticks were never grown,

Tripence, man, they'd tak' it frae ye though it gar'd ye change a poun';

But we gie oor min's an easin', to a' reason deaf and dumb,

When they canna fin' their "Season," "Pey it's then or oot ye come."

Saft and simple, sharp and shifty, a' in turn oor haun's come through,

Hauf-fare lassocks over fifty, growin' lads at fortytwo;

"Servant" comin' on to duty, miss'd the goods—we'll no miss you,

"Guest?" Na guess't yersel, my beauty, ticket's what we want th' noo.

"Pass," exactly, we will know it after you've produced the thing;

"Season?" Well, ye'll need to show it or we'll season't wi' a "Spring;"

"Ticket." Have'na gotten ony, ninepence is the modest sum,

Sharp's the word, fork up the money, "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Land of tartan-kilted champions, shades of "Roy" and "Roderick Dhu,"

Here a freen frae yont the Grampians "hauf as drunk and twice as fou;"

Come awa', my Hielan' laddie, wauken oot yer dream the noo,

We're no pey'd for waitin' a-day on a sleepy heid like you.

Didna hear us seek yer ticket? clean yer lugs when ye gang hame;

"Gang tae Nick?" we'll need to nick it wi' oor punches a' the same.

Lost it? Nonsense! fin' yer pouches, nae time here tae haw and hum,

Noo, my freen', yer in oor clutches, "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Here's a "First" compartment, fower-in't a' wi' tickets for a "Third,"

Awfu' innocent they glower in't, canna scarcely speak a word;

Freens they're a' o' yin anither, frae New Camlock airt they cam'

Maggie Lauder and her brither, Andrew Airmor's
Jean and Tam—

Soncey faced and kintra rigget, trains afore they ne'er had seen,

Milkmaids frae aboot the Briggate, sour-milk Jocks frae Glesca Green;

Didna ken, were jist mistooken, here's a sixpence keep it "mum,"

No sae green as cabbage-lookin', "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Here a big wig swears like thunder, hear him how he snaps his thoom,

No a single seat, nae wonder that the "Fists" are short o' room;

Here's a fat auld laird and leddy, each yin fills the room o' twa,

Feth! a train o' them wad steady ony engine e'er ye saw.

There's oor auld freend Pat O'Hara, whitenin', rag, and candyman.

A' beside him but his barrow, smokin' like a chimlacan: In beside him, hale and hearty, Soop, the sweep, as black's the lum.

Thought it was a "Third" my certy, "Pey the odds or oot ye come."

A' the roughs and dirty faces, a' the riff-raff o' the toun,

Straucht frae Ayr or Paisley Races, in a cluster comin' doun,

Sweetie-wifes and thimmel-riggers, sharks and shairpers hurryin' in ;

In below the seats ye beggars, bundle up and save yer tin;

Lang-eed Aundry comes aboot, and nane's sae smairt as hide frae him.

Frae their dens he draws them oot, and kicks the stilt frae limpin' Jim;

Nae need here for hearts o' blubber, hard as flint and black as gum,

Nick's the place for you ye lubber, "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Shairp and cute though time has made us, mony a hunner times we're din.

Mony a soople prank is played us, listen and I'll tell ye yin.

In a "Third" compartment lately six guid cronies ca'd the crack,

A' but ae puir wife wha blately sat and graned, but never spak',

As she'd on the platform lingered, glowerin' round at a' she saw,

Some vile rascal tarry fingers stole her ticket, purse, and a';

At the ticket-lifting station, pity she'd no get a crum,
This and he the columbian (1 Per non more or control

This wad be the salutation, "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

Sair she graned and girned aboot it, wondered where it could has gane.

Kent na what she'd dae withoot it, wad they tak' her oot the train; Till up raise a swell, a stranger, tak' the use o' mine, quo he,

It will keep ye oot o' danger, and be nane the waur for me;

Dinna let them see the back o't, where ye got it never tell.

Me! nae fears, I ken the knack o't, cute enough to min' mysel',

I'll sail clear, I ne'er yet sticket, owre their een I'll draw the scum,

Though I've neither pass nor ticket, oot I'll never need tae come.

In his new duds sailin' proodly, new-come-Tam gaed trampin' in,

Tickets please, he yelpit loodly, got them a' exceptin' yin—

Ticket? cried the swell, I gied ye't, put it in yer haun the noo;

By my sang but you're an idiot, either that or else yer fu?;

Don't believ't, ye'll fin' my name on't on the back, I wrote it doun,

Look them up ye'll see the same on't, there it is, see Tammas Broon.

Tam was din for yince, I'm thinkin', by my word he lookit glum,

Hoo they lauched tae sae him slinkin', "Pey yer wey or oot ye come."

# BETSY M'NABB.

OUCE Betsy M'Nabb was a hale wife, few wives their pairt as did she,

To auld Rab she had ave proved a rale wife, though sair failed and cruppin' doun he;

Their waddin' I weel can remember; she was auchteen an' no a day mair;

'Twas anither May tied to December—he was up in the forties somewhere;

But she ken'd wha and what she was takin', that his heart was as kind as 'twas true,

And to lie on this bed o' her makin' she never had reason to rue.

Though they could'na be ca'd fortune-makers in their wee clean kept dairy up by,

Wi'its steadin' and hauf-score o'acres, wi' its pony an' hauf-dizzen kye.

Though but few of life's dainties were granted, and though humble in cleadin' and fare,

They aye got as much as they wanted, were content, and the best has nae mair;

A hamely garb clean and weel clooted, and a guid meal o' "tatties en' dab;"

Queens might be mair blest, but I doot it, than douce kindly Betsy M'Nabb.

Merrit life, what a wonnerfu' cleckin' aroun' twa douce bodies it brings,

Sic a wee crood o' steerin', heart-breakin', fat, rinaboot rattlin' things;

Since to journey through life baith thegether auld Rab and douce Betsy were wed

Scarce a 'ear cam' but brought them anither wee mooth that wad need to be fed;

But the guid God abune, wha can lessen to the wee lamb the strength o' the win',

For ilk helpless and wee nakit blessin', aye took care to provide a new spin,

Though bothered at times was the body ever toiling by day and by nicht,

It had aye been her life-aim and study to dae only the thing that was richt;

Lang, lang Rab had oot and in toited, helping on, till he could'na help mair,

Till at length, blin' and lame and sair-doited, he sat down in his ain easy chair;

But she never complained o't or cavilled, through life's wonnerfu' wearisome wab

Had some threads in't sair wuffled and ravelled to douce, decent Betsy M'Nabb.

No a cleanlier wife nor mair tidy wad ye meet wi' at market or fair;

To the toun gaed she down ilka Friday to dae a' her marketin's there;

Her form was the strauchtest and triggest. The farmers' wives a' had confesst.

Her eggs were the freshest and biggest, her butter the sweetest and best.

Help she never was kent to need ony, she could pit things thegether and plan,

She could cairt coals and peats wi' the pony, ay, and handle a spade like a man;

She could plew up the grun', dreel, and set are the spuds in her ain tattie fiel';

Guid kens if she wore the breeks, Betsy, few men ever filled them sae weel.

While Rab aye needed muckle attention, and 'twas muckle atweel that he gat,

Aucht he wanted he jist had to mention and he got it, 'twas nae maitter what,

And 'twas din withoot quizzin' and quarrelling, nae yowlin' nor girnin' nor gab;

There was ne'er sic a guid "auld man's darlin" than she proved to be, Betsy M'Nabb.

And God blest her wi' health and wi' vigour, and she lived on in quait and content,

And her bricht face and hamely-clad figure was made welcome wherever she went.

Till she left him behind her as mornin' for her marketin' doun at the toun;

But lang ere 'twas time for returnin', a sair shock had strucken him doun.

She had no'er heard a whisper the mair o't, hadna auld Davy Lindsey, the laird,

In his feelin' wey made her aware o't, and tauld her o'what he had heard,

Dim her e'en grew that aye were the clearest, sad her face grew that aye were a smile—

Oh! I'll haste hame, she sighed, at the nearest, by the Line it will save me a mile.

This morn when I left he was sittin' richt cheery, and ca'in' the crack,

He'll be down noo sair troubled and frettin', and wearily wishin' me back;

Four miles was to her little labour, that had ne'er darkened carriage or cab,

Wi' guid day to the Laird, her kind neighbour, awa' gaed douce Betsy M'Nabb.

Doun the howm, by the burn, sabbin' sair-worn up the brae, and the lang plantin' through,

Wi'a broo that was burnin' and care-worn, and a heart that was heavy and fou;

Sad the weary win wailed in her hearin', o'erburdened wi' ill seemed the air,

Strange vision glints ever appearin' o' a face she wad never see mair.

Ower the narrow brig, dreamin' nae danger, that has heard the daith moan o' a few,

Wae's me, what a place for a stranger, when a train at each end comes in view.

Cam' the "Down" goods, Jack Thomson wha drove her, saw a woman in front by her dress.

He whistled, she frichtened leapt over, richt in front o' the "Up" L'ne Express.

There the surfacemen found her sune efter, and the doctor was sent for wi' speed,

But the last spark o' bein' had left her, puir kindhearted Betty was deid;

Through the hale length and breadth of the parish, gaed the news to ilk heart like a stab,

A' had fond recollections to cherish o' the guid heart o' Betsy M'Nabb.

Hame, ay! it were weel were we a' gaun when life's weary fauchts ower, to the same,

Auld Rab never kent o' her wa' gaun, he was deid when they carried her hame,

His life-licht that sae fitful was burnin', was quenched by the cauld haun' o' Daith,

Wha to save him the fash o' returnin' had made as summons dae for them baith.

A' is wreck noo in hoose, byre, and stable, to fa' in e'en the roof has began,

Nane to leeve on't since then has been able, she could dae what nae ither yin can;

Wi' the smile o' content beamin' o'er her, she'd a wee Heaven there o' her ain,

She did what nae man did afore her, and what nae yin'll e'er dae again;

But the seeds that on earth she has puttin' will yield a rich harvest to come,

What she's din here'll no be forgotten when God calls his ain people home;

In the auld place o' graves on the hillside, they are baith laid below the same slab,

And ye'll search lang and vain for an ill-side in the life work o' Letsy M'Nabb.

# H МНИ'S Н МНИ, &c.

N oor famed sugar toun at the Tail o' the Bank, Which, for commerce and trade, stands the foremost in rank,

Where the world wags alang wi' a never dune clank.

Where the rivets are driven wi' rattle and din,
Where the sugar gangs oot, and the beet-root comes
in.

Wi' each snort o' the engine and puff o' the win'.

Where the finest o' ships in the world are displayed, Where a' poor folk are paupers, where fortunes are made.

And the land shark is blest wi' a flourishing trade.

Where he waits on his victim and makes him secure, Till the whole of his wages, hard won, are made sure:

And the tar that came rich goes away again poor.

Where the black, red, and yellow, from many a clime,

Have got mixed 'mong the whites as the sand mixes lime,

Where they prosper on evil and fatten on crime.

Than Wattie M'Hattie, sae quait and sae queer, A mair kindly, canny-gaun creature was ne'er, Aye rinnin' and racin' 'tween platform and pier.

No an hour o' the day but his form ye micht see, Wi' a load like a cuddy 'tween station and quay, A hard-workin' chiel', but maist wonnerfu' wee.

Sic a comical body as he was, indeed, Aye scuddin' alang at the tap o' his speed.

Wi' his wee legs and body and great muckle heid.

As gleg as a weasel in baith e'e and ear; If ye peak o' the deil, why, the deil 'ill appear; If ye juist whistled Wattie, losh! Wattie was near.

A schule, he ne'er darkened yin's door in his life; A' his business transactions he left to his wife; On the cash her haun closed like the click o' a knife.

When ony twa wanted to raise up a spree, 'Boot his heicht they'd pretend that they could'na agree:

Naething roused him sae much as to say he was wee.

When to look for a porter somebody cam' roun', To gang aff, it micht be, to the en' o' the toun For some yin wha wanted his luggage brocht doun.

Oot his pencil and book frae his pouch he wad draw, "Wad ye jist write it doun, sir, ere ye gang awa, The name, hoose, and street, and the 'oor I'm to ca'?

"I'm sae deuced dull o' hearin'," he'd say wi' a shrug,

"Ye've to bark in my ear like the yelp o' a dug; It's an awfu' sair want, sir, the loss o' the lug."

To the next yin he met his wee book he wad gie,
"Wi' without my auld specks noucht ava can I see;
Wad ye kindly obleege and read this note to me?"

Wi' a thank ye, sir, gien in his auld-fashioned squeak,

Nae ithers to read it he needed to seek,

Yince he ken'd what it was, he could min't for a
week.

Blin' and deaf—neither yin nor the ither a wheet, Had ye drapped a sixpenny-piece on the street He was jist the wee man that wad baith hear and see't.

Yet 'twas toom as a whistle his great muckle block, Though he carried his timepiece like a' ither folk, 'Twas a' Greek, sae far's he kend, the face o' a clock. Weel I min' hoo Rab Reid, that's noo deid and away, Thoucht he'd tak' a bit set oot o' Wattie as day, And wad speir him the time jist to see what he'd say.

"What's the time?" "Dod, I'll sune tell ye that," replied he,

And his watch frae his pouch in a wink he gar'd flee. When he'd held it a thount in a line wi' his e'e.

To his held gaed his haun', to the side gaed his hat.

Then he turned the watch face roun' on Rab fair and flat.

"Gosh me!" he cried, "Rab, wad ye thocht it was that?"

Ony yin o' the chaps that was present can tell Rab turned on his heel, and his jaw rather fell, He had gotten a set, but 'twas taen oot o' himsel'.

Weel it happened a'e day when as thrang's he could be,

Shiftin' luggage and trunks frae the boat to the quay,

Wi' a big yin he trippit and fell in the sea.

Ere a soul could be cheepit the cry was sent roun'—
"There's a boy in the water; guid save us, he'll
droon;"

"It's a boy," they a' shouted that saw him gaun down.

Like a knife it cut Wattie to hear what they cried; A boy! Sic an insult he couldna abide;

It was waur to disgest than the mud o' the Clyde.

"It's a man, no' a boy," he half-chockit squealed oot,

Squirtin' water and mud through his teeth and his snoot;

Soom for life! no's stroke wi' his honour in doot.

Though a score o' strong haun's wad ha'e pu'd him ashore.

He wadna as muckle's tak' catch o' an oar; A boy! he was ne'er sae affronted afore.

- "Catch the oar," cried Tam Tait, frae the fit o' the stair:
- "Catch the oar, or ye'll sink." "Let me sink; I don't care.

I'm a man," gurgled Wattie, as mad as a bear.

Life, and pey sic a price for't, he car'd na aboot, Though he drooned where he was, he'd pit richt the dispute;

"It's a man, cry a man, or I'll never come oot."

"It's a man," at length skirled oot a nervous auld wife.

And the papers next day put an en' tae the strife, When they told how a simple word saved a MAN'S life.

#### WRONGED.

ELL me not 'tis a fanciful picture. Ah, no!

Came a fiend in the form of a mortal 'neath the cover of night to the rail,

Placed a block on the down line before her, and wrecked the Late Limited Mail.

- A flash and a flame in the darkness from the lights of the overturned train,
- A crash and a breaking of timbers, a long, piercing echo of pain,
- And the bloom that shone fair in the sunshine will never reblossom again.

Proud men coming home from their business, from the bustle and stir of the town,

Fair dames in the height of the fashion from the gay city scenes coming down,

Poor workers in mud-begrimm'd garments, poor women in russet and brown.

Begone ye with hearts that are tender, go pity and mercy away;

God be praised that the sleuthhounds of justice are so soon on the track of their prey,

That the doer of evil no longer is where he can injure and slay.

By proofs that seem clear as the noonday the poor wretch is hopelessly hemm'd,

The people have ceased from their wailings, the tide of their wrath has been stemm'd,

What boots it who may be the victim sufficient that one is condemned?

A mother sits sad by a cradle where a baby is slumbering nigh,

A little boy plays on the doorstep with a happy and innocent eye,

On the old time-worn clock in the corner the long hours drag heavily by.

A widow? Ah, no! Death were welcome. A widow? Would God it were so;

What a balm to the heart weak and wounded, what a bliss and a comfort to know,

In the old place of graves on the hillside her loved one lay peaceful and low.

All these years has she suffered and laboured, full of trust, hoping ever and on,

Till her fingers are stiffened and weary, till her eyes dim and sightless have grown.

Oh, my God! Oh! how long must I wrestle from her heart comes the half-whispered moan.

And the baby sleeps on in its cradle, and the boy at the door stops his play,

And the last spark dies out in the embers, and the twilight sinks silent and grey;

And the life of the sad, silent weeper is wearing and wasting away.

And the day deepens into the darkness, and the reaper, whose labour is done,

- Seeks the winding path home by the hillside, the lone woman's dwelling to shun.
- Oh, God! that a convict should ever have a wife, or a babe, or a son.
- Arrayed in the garb of a fclon, away from the land of his birth;
- Away from his home and his loved ones, 'mong the dregs and the vilest of earth;
- An innocent man, yet a convict. What a jest for their horrible mirth!
- Gone, buried and banished for ever! he lives and he labours on still;
- Long ago had he sunk 'neath his burden if torture and trouble could kill.
- Dead to life, love, and hope, living only to the weight of his terrible ill.
- He had trusted in God with the patience of a Job when his trials began,
- Hoping on against hope, in his darkness he had held up his head like a man;
- But, alas, for the faith he had cherished, God helps not, and none other can.
- Oh, the maddening thought, how it 'whelms him till the brain burns and boils in his head;
- Till he curses and raves at the living, and blesses and envies the dead,
- And tears wild at his chains and his fetters till his wrists and his ankles are red.
- Cut off from the land of the living; shut out from the light of the sun,
- He wails from the depths of his dungeon—"Oh, my God, if there ever be one
- To deserve all this heart-crushing anguish, what a terrible thing have I done."
- A strong man lies bleeding and broken, struck down in the heat of the fray;
- The sands of his life, like the moments, all silently ebbing away;

Unprepared is he all for the journey, but the summons he dare not delay.

All the sins of his life rise before him, like phantoms they crowd round him now,

Branded each with its rank among evil, the when it was done, and the how;

And each one adds its weight to the burden that is crushing his brain and his brow.

Oh, God! but the prayer he would utter, is checked ere he well can begin,

No bless't ark of refuge is opened for his sin-laden soul to come in:

They must reap a full harvest of sorrow, who sow in the byways of sin.

And the glare in his eye becomes wilder, as he tells them how once on a time

Was a deed by him done in the darkness, a fearful and terrible crime,

How the guilty escaped, while the guiltless was doomed to a far away clime.

But the web of his life has been woven, the warp and the woof has been spun,

On the verge of eternity's dark gulf, his doom he no longer may shun,

And he wails with no hope in his wailing, will it never, oh never, be done.

Down the road in the soft autumn gloaming a stranger comes, who can he be?

A poor, careworn, broken-down creature, from a prison-home far o'er the sea—

And the innocent man who was banished for the guilt of another is free.

Gone his proud independence for ever, gone his once sturdy, resolute mein,

To his home on the green sloping hillside he creeps as afraid to be seen,

On his wrists and his ankles still wearing the scars where the fetters have been.

And he dreams of those bright hours of gladness, of life's peace ere he knew of its pain,

Of the awful suspense and the waiting, that ha worn him down worse than the chain,

As he stands a free man on the threshold of his own happy homestead again,

He passes the rosy-faced dreamer asleep on the step at the door,

He passes the babe in the cradle, where rigid and cold on the floor,

Lies the loved one of all in a slumber from which she will never wake more.

A poor aimless weakling he wanders, he babbles of joys to be won,

Far away o'er the cloudy hills yonder, and he points to the soft setting sun,

When o'er earth creeps the sweet tranquil gloaming, and his weary life's labour is done.

### H RAT AT THE PARRITCH.

AB Broon and Rab Black were as weel-kenn'd

As had e'er trode the croon o' the causey in Ayr;
On the railway th'gither they wrought for their
breid.

And leeved "but and ben" on the same auld stair-

Though the hauf o' the toun micht wi' clashes be stirr'd,

'Tween the Broons and the Blacks ye wad ne'er hear a word;

'Twad hae taen a queer story a fa' oot to mak' Atween canny Rab Broon and as canny Rab Black. Rab Broon was a porter, a tousy-faced tyke,
As proud as a lord and as sweet as ye like,
In the company's uniform, brushed up and dress'd,
He'd hae taen, or I'm cheated, the shine oot the
best.

A guid steady wage frae the railway he gat, Wi' a tip whiles frae this yin and whiles yin frae that:

Till the maist o' the men had an unco guid guess He'd a shillin' or twa lockit by in the press.

Never lang oot o' mischief, aye working queer tricks, A man that wi' a kinds o' people could mix; Rab cared na' a fig for their wealth or their name, He could talk to a peer and a pauper the same. He could smoke, he could drink, he could blether an' blaw.

I hae heard some lang stories, but his yins beat a'; Siccan wonnerfu' yearns as he spun in yer lug Wad hae brocht even smiles to the face o' a dug.

Rab Black was a man o' queer measures and moods, He had wroucht thirty years if a day at the goods; Frae some far aff clachan he cam' to't when young, And an awfu' queer body when roused wi' the tongue.

As lang's he kept temper and naething gaed wrang, His wark and his words slippit smoothly alang; But when yince his ill nature the upper haun' gat, 'Twas a puzzle to ken what he'd like to be at.

No a day ever gaed ower his heid but a row Was got up by the men to pit Rab in a lowe; For nae ither reason but merely to hear The moothfu's he made when he started to swear. Though they aye took guid care to keep oot o' his

If they hadna, my feth, he'd hae gar'd them staun' up;

If he just could get at them their ears he wad ring, "Ay, that he wad dae tae, the very first thing."

Nae odds hoo the wark cam he sune rattled thro't, There was nae useless cuts made when Rab was aboot, Oot o' nae easy ossey saft stock had he sprung, Nae sheep's heid had Nature on his shoothers flung. Nae odds what confusion in yard or quay fell, He aye saw his way thro't as clear as a bell, While for catchin', and cuttin', and shuntin' a draw. He could yet gi'e some wise yins a lesson or twa.

At their hames, "but and ben," when frae labour let clear,

The tricks that they played yin anither were queer. Wi' their singin' and shoutin', their rantin' and rhymes.

'Twas a lively stairheid, I can tell ye, at times. But as lang as they keepit their fun to themsels, They had never nae trouble wi' ony yin else, Till the queerest o' pranks I e'er kend o' was din A'e mornin' last March, when Rab Black sleepit in.

Jen, his wife, had got up in a deil o' a flee,
And had sparkit a spunk the auld clock face to see.
"Guid gracious, Rab Black," she skirled oot, "here's
" a fix,

As fack as I'm here it's a quarter to six."

Rab was oot ower the chairs frae his bed in a crack,

And had pu'ed on his breeks wi' the front to the
back.

While Jen a' her cleadin aboot her had thrown, And the pat for the parritch had quickly put on.

In the shortest o' notice Rab's dressing was din, While Jen, wi' her pairt o't, was nae wey ahin. Few wives could hae din things as quick as she did, A better than Jen never lifted a lid, And afore Rab had cause for a girn or a growl, The partich was made and dished into a bowl. And to save ony waitin', wi' douce hamely care, Jen had set them to cool at the heid o' the stair.

Rab Broon, ben the hoose, when he saw them set oot,

To work some queer caper at yince set aboot.
"Hey! wife," he cried, winkin', "keep quait and ye'll see,

Oot o' Rab and his parritch this mornin' a spree.

Gang and fetch the rat speuchan, ye ken what I mean,

That ye brocht me to haud my tobacco yestreen. A rat on the stair at the break o' daylicht, My certy, but Jen lass, ye'r in for a fricht."

The rat was produced, and he quickly began
To bring to the wished for conclusion his plan,
Oot he crept to the stairhead as saft as a cat,
And close to the bowl pat the nose o' the rat
In a wey that it couldna weel miss bein' seen
Wi'its lang switchin' tail, and its great glowerin'
e'en,

Pushed the door to, and keek'd thro' the keyhole to see—

What the upshot o' a' his manœuvres micht be.

Oot Jen cam' for the parritch to tak' them awa, And had boo'd doon to lift them, when guid save us a',

Back she jamp like a young yin, and gied sic a yell
That micht even hae frichted auld horney himsel'.
Ben she ran to her ain hoose as white as could be,
While she shook in her shoon like the leaf o' a tree;
"There's a rat in the parritch, rin Rab," she cried,
"rin,

Tak' the brush oot and hit it afore it comes in."

"A rat," echoed Rab, "losh! that's naething ava, I thoucht 'twas some thief cam' to murder us a'; Gie's a grup o' the brush, if the beast disna rin, My word, but I'll gie him sair banes in his skin." On his tiptaes he crept to the heid o' the stair, When wha would hae thoucht it, the rat was still there.

Wi' his e'e on the vermin, the brush weel drawn back,

He set himsel' up for a thunderin' crack.

Like a shot frae a gun at the rat he played flee, Wi'sic force that the shank o' the brush broke in three,

And the poor harmless bowl got its feenishin' claw, And the parritch was plastered on stairheid and wa'.

While naething the waur o't, the rat stoppit still, Guid guide us, he thought, will the vermin no kill; No the least put aboot, no a squeak nor a squeal,

There it sat glowerin' at him, wi' e'en like the deil.

Up his big fit he lifted and gied it a cuff, Ower it turned on its back, when a'e glint was enough:

When he saw hoo he'd been taen sae awfully in, He swore like a Turk, and made nae little din. Gied us twa verse o' something that wasna a hymn, Threw his hat doon and kicket the croon frae the rim.

Gied the luckless rat speuchan a share o' his kicks. And vowed that Rab Broon wad yet pey for his tricks.

# FOUND ON THE LINE.

OUND on the line, the dead darling, only a sunny month old:

Sinless and sweet as the sunshine, lifeless, and breathless, and cold:

One tiny lamb that had wandered gathered again to the fold.

One tiny bloom in life's garden that blossomed an hour and was gone.

One little eye bruised and blood-stained by the edge of the pitiless stone,

One tiny hand held imploring for the love that it never had known.

Pure as the pale, spotless rose-bloom washed by the soft summer rain.

Nothing to tell of its anguish, nothing to show of its

Only the mark on the forehead where the jagged stone cut to the brain.

Cast forth that the shame might not tarnish a soul black in guilt and despair,

That had come like a thief in the darkness, that had gone, and we never knew where;

Oh, God! that such weeds bloom and blossom in a world all so fruitful and fair.

Comes a prop of the Church, but he passes with never a look at the place.

And my Lady of Lands in her splendour from the tiny corpse hurries apace,

While a wanton, whose sins are as scarlet, lets one holy tear fall on its face.

And a well in her breast is reopened, which the milldews of sin had o'ergrown,

And she hugs to her bosom and fondles the clay that was never her own.

But the world sees no love in such vileness, and the poor, ragged wretch must be gone.

'Tis morn, and a bright sun is beaming on a city of sorrow and sin;

Like the surge of a never still ocean comes the sound of its bustle and din,

Where a grand equipage is in waiting for the train from afar to come in.

And it comes, and glad voices of welcome ring clear on the pure morning air,

And the leaders of beauty and fashion, and the kingliest nobles are there,

But the proudest of all is my Lady, none else in the city so fair.

And my Lady has right to look proudly, of her charms she may well appear vain,

For her beauty is fair as the noonday, and her honour is free from a stain,

And the one spot that darkened her sunshine has been swept from her vision again.

Society wakes at her coming, hearts flutter to know she is nigh,

The highest born pause to salute her as she dashes disdainfully by,

Even princes are pleased when she flings them a glance from her beautiful eye.

Time flies, hearts unite and grow fonder, time flies, hearts grow cold and estranged,

Love reaches a mark with his arrow, all his lost darts are tenfold avenged,

And the world is awakened one morning to hear of a marriage arranged.

'Tis even in God's hallowed temple, look in and around if you will,

As the Bishop binds two hearts together in a voice strangely solemn and still,

To love, obey, honour, and cherish through life with its good and its ill.

There is mirth in the old time-worn mansion, there is bustle and stir in the hall,

And the gay, and the young, and the noble, whirl round in the circling ball;

And my Lord is the proudest of nobles, and my Lady the gayest of all.

There's a rattle of wheels on the gravel, there is bustle and stir at the door,

Peeps the first streak of dawn through the curtains, and the dance and the music is o'er,

And the form of the heary old castle stands silent and grim as before.

And my Lady has passed from the circle, new beauties are throned in her place,

Though stately as ever her bearing, though queenly as ever her grace,

Stern Time with his withering fingers has made lines on her beautiful face.

From her home in her gay cushioned carriage, my Lady drives out and comes in,

With the great city surging around her, she wails o'er its vice and its sin,

And wonders if ever its millions to lead holier lives will begin.

And she's fearfully timid and tender, and so feeling for others in pain,

And I oftentimes watch her and wonder, if a thought ever enters her brain—

Of a dead baby found on the railway by the guard of a mineral train.

And the tale has been told and forgotten, and the scene passed beyond our recall,

But a God from whose infinite knowledge, not even a sparrow can fall;

In the day when His jewels are chosen, will know, and remember it all.

### SAWNEY M'GRAW.

ANG-LEGGIT, lang-bodied, lang-neckit, and slim

Is Sawney, the shunter—ye a' ken o' him.

A mair honest, hard-workin' cr'atur' than he

Never turned a red haun'-lamp on 163.

Quiet, simple, and ceevil, he'll turn ony gait;

No daft—but juist what ye'd ca' short o' a slate;

And, nae maitter hoo sairly his leg ye micht draw,

Ye will ne'er howk a quarrel oot o' Sawney M'Graw.

Sawney sticks like a burr to the wark till it's by,
And, although he can tak' a bit taste on the sly,
And's been even aff wark yince or twice on the beer,
He is no a wheet waur than the feck o' us here.
Last New 'ear Day, nae farther, when a' but a few
Were toomin' their bottles, and gettin' fast fou,
When the sax o'clock bell gied the nicht shift the
ca',

A' turned oot at the summons but Sawney M'Graw.

The hoo and the wherefore was no ill to fin'—
He'd been seen in "M'Dougal's" that same efternin,

Where we charged him wi' drinkin'; he swore 'twas a lee—

A' the drink he had got wadna kindl't yer e'e.
On a New 'ear he'd no tasted less for a while—
It was naething but jist a bit touch o' the bile;
"For, except three half-mutchkins and ac pint or
twa.

I ne'er tasted speerits," quo' Sawney M'Graw.

Never havin' been under the dominie's care, The names o' the stations aft puzzle him sair. "Gi'e me trucks for Dalmellin'ton," aye he wad say—

"Ye wad ken whaur they're gaun to—a half-mile away;

But there's Beith, and here's Leith, a coal waggon for each—

It wad tak' e'en a spaewife to tell which was which, Or a college-bred big-wig, choke fu' o' the law— For my ain pairt, I canna," quo' Sawney M'Graw.

Yince a pencey wee man, fon' o' naething but noise, Thoucht he'd try and poke fun' oot o' big corderoys. Hey! porter, he cried, I'd just like to be told How many this dirty compartment should hold; Ten men, replied Sawney, is what we alloo—And twenty when nane o' them's bigger than you; It's the weicht o' the man, no the strength o' his jaw,

That's oor guide in sic cases, quo' Sawney M'Graw.

That foot-warmers into compartments were put;
Was a thing at the first he kent naething about;
There's a queer story whiles tell'd about him and
yin.

As a gent. steppit oot, Sawney chanced to look in, Where a brent-new pan lay wi' a weel polished face. He thoucht it some new fangled travelling-case; Sae he gruppit the handle and gied it a draw—Hey, Mister, yer luggage, cried Sawney M'Graw.

Cam' an auld sodger yince wha was short o' a wing; At the siege o' Strathbungo he'd lost the old thing; Strathbungo? quo' Sawney, man, that's shairly queer,

'Twas a circular-saw the last time ye were here; Quite right, quo' the hero, I said what was true; I'll explain in a word how it happened to you—At the "siege" every man o' us foucht wi' a saw, That explains the whole business, quo' Sawney M'Graw.

Thrang mixin' his toddy in pimple-faced Jean's
Ae nicht wi' Wull Watson and some ither freens,
Cam' that teetotal body, Tam Tait, and began
Wi' "there's daith in that cup you are mixin', my
man:"

Sawney tasted the mixture. Quo' he, by my sang Tam has hit the nail this time; he's no sae far wrang:

Ye may ca' ben anither half-mutchin or twa, For we've fair droon'd the miller, quo' Sawney M'Graw.

Well, wha wad hae thought it—surprises are rife; Sawney threw up his lodgings to marry a wife, But when a' things were ready twa braw brides were there,

Baith able and anxious his wages to ware;

My faigs! he for yince in his life got a fricht;
He could only see ac way o' puttin' things richt;
If 'twas a' the same thing he wad marry the twa;
They wad fecht! Let them fecht then, quo' Sawney
M'Graw.

In this queer warld o' oors, that turns queerer each day,

We are a' wise enough in oor ain canny way;
O' oor wit and oor wisdom we mak' great pretence;
But they're no aye the wisest that's fouest o' sense;
To return what we have'na we'll never be press't,
Nor account for the talents we never possesst;
And I oftentimes think 'twad be weel if we a'
Had as little guile in us as Sawney M'Graw.

### A NIGHT IN THE DEADHOUSE.

WAS a dismal dark night in December, the lights glared unusually red,

"From the Docks to the Superintendent," came a message, which simply said—

"Six waggons pushed into the Harbour, and Dickson, the driver, is dead."

What, dead! we would scarcely believe it, when we heard the sad message read o'er,

We had never in all our experience got a shock that had startled us more,

He was always afraid it would happen, with that nasty old "Dubbs" 84.

And we sent out a messenger promptly, for the "break-down" to muster a squad,

And proceeded to gather together all the blocks, jacks, and tools that we had,

For we knew from the tone of the message, that the case was unusually bad.

One by one from their homes they came trooping, with never a thought of delay,

Young men in the might of their manhood, old men in the sere leaf and grey,

Each eager, and able, and anxious, to do all that he could in his way.

A shout from old Daniel, the driver, as a short starting whistle he blew,

A snort from the old pilot engine, as his steam regulator he drew.

Then away through the night and the darkness, on our journey we speedily flow.

And the bells with their "break down train" signal, cleared the line for our passage ahead;

On, on, we went jolting and clanking, with never a signal light red,

Till we stopped where the sad case had happened, at the end of the old steamboat shed.

Where in 'twixt the bench and the waggons, poor Jim had got doubled and crushed,

From his eyes, ears, and mouth in a moment, all the blood that was in him had rushed,

And the voice that was ever the clearest, was suddenly, awfully hushed.

They had borne him away on a stretcher to the hospital up by the hill,

There to lie on the floor of the deadhouse, cold, cheerless, and fearfully still,

Till his friends could come over and claim him, when they knew of their terrible ill.

And all the night long as we laboured by the lights that burned fitful and dim,

Our thoughts from our work ever wandered, ever dreaming, and thinking of him

Who lay up in the gloomy vault yonder, in the grasp of death, icy and grim.

And in fancy it seemed as we listened to the wail of a woman's despair,

Making frantic appeals unto Heaven, to her God, as if doubting him there,

To strengthen her back for the burden, that was all but too heavy to bear.

All the night on the edge did she hover of insanity's hopeless abyss,

Wailing wild for her dead to be brought her, that his cold, icy brow she might kiss;

Oh! never before was there witnessed a sorrow so heavy as this.

She was far too weak in the morning for her sorrowful duty, they said,

So a message came up to the foreman who had charge of the engine shed,

For some one of the men who had known him to go out and come home with the dead.

He came over to me with the message; it were better, he said. I should go:

It was all the respect for our old mate we would ever be able to show:

All right, I replied, I am ready; I dared never have answered him no.

That he might have sent some one more fitted for the work I had never a doubt;

'Twas a sad and a sorrowful business, that I did not at all care about;

So I thought as I made for the station and took the first passenger out.

When I got to the hospital buildings, and had told what my business was clear

To the man who had charge of the deadhouse, he looked at me strangely and queer,

Says he, friend, I'm afraid you're mistaken; we've no dead that I know about here.

It's been all a confounded mistake, sir, but we've now got the matter put right;

He was dead, so they told us who brought him, and was put in the deadhouse all night;

When we went there to get him this morning you may guess that he gave us a fright.

When we heard from the darkness a moaning the very blood in us grew chill;

Though half frozen and stiff in the corner, there was breath, there was life in him still;

Jove! there's some of you men on the railway take a queer lot of crushing to kill.

Take him out of the dark and damp chamber we did, as 'twas proper to do;

He got special attention and nursing as soon as the Governor knew:

And he's now getting on very well, sir; you'll find him in Ward Number Two. Away through the passage I hurried, I waited on no second call,

Till I stood by his bedside, and found him not so very much hurt after all;

His leg had sustained a bad fracture, while his body was bruised by the fall.

Yes; there he lay living and easy, a smile on his old face once more;

In grasping the hand of a fellow I had ne'er felt such pleasure before;

Yet in less than it takes me to tell you I was making again for the door.

You may guess with what stirring emotions my overcharged bosom was rife,

As I sped from the ward to the station to take the glad news to his wife;

I never before nor yet after made so speedy a run in my life.

With what tokens of joy and of rapture my words on her greedy ear fell;

Of the brightness that burst through the darkness no mortal will ever can tell;

All we know is that Dickson, the driver, is living, and working, and well.

And the men who neglected their business for once in their lives got a scare;

It took them both money and labour to settle the awkward affair;

Jim was nothing the worse, I can tell you, for his night in the damp deadhouse there.

## MEMORIES DEAR.

(John Aitken, the author's youngest brother, died 26th August, 1881, aged 24 years.)

"All was ended now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow.

All the aching of heart, the restless, unsatisfied longing.

All the dull, deep pain, and constant anguish of patience."

(Ecangeline.)

ARKNESS deep around, above me, all the night and all the day,

Till my brain beneath the burden throbs and reels;

Nothing see I but strange phantoms that will not be chased away,

Nothing hear I but the din of rushing wheels; Gazing down the wooded valley with an eager, longing strain.

I can hear the warning whistle, clear and shrill,
I can see the strong-framed engine, with its long
and heavy train,

Speeding swift along the bridge and up the hill.

Through the mists of years I see him once again a laughing boy.

With the rosy glow of youth upon his brow, When our lives were full of pleasures, and no shadow dimmed our joy;

As he danced before us then, I see him now, And I seek the open doorway with my heart expectant full,

When the autumn nights are falling soft and still,

Looking eager for his coming when the boys return from school;

But he is not on the street nor up the hill.

Once again my fancy paints him going forth at early day

To his labour in the town beyond the well, Or at night returning homeward in his quiet, contented way

When the sombre shades of evening softly fell, And I hasten out to meet him, while weird fancies wake in me.

Drawn by some strange fascination 'gainst my will,

And I see the lads returning from their spell of labour free;

But he is not on the street nor up the hill.

Or again, at early morning I am up before the sun, And I make with tender hands his homely fare, And I ope his door to wake him as I ever yet have done.

But the room is cold, and oh! he is not there.

Sure he has not gone? I question, he is somewhere
very nigh.

And there creeps around my heart an eerie chill, And I hasten to the doorway with an eager, longing eye,

But he is not on the street nor up the hill.

Farther on in life I see him, sunny-browed, but strangely fair,

Of ambition in his breast a tiny flame, Going forth each Monday morning to the city's

Going forth each Monday morning to the city' gloom and glare,

Coming back each sunny Saturday the same. Home again to spend the Sabbath, free from city strife and din,

With that old love for his homestead in him still;
And I scan the rows of faces when the bus comes
driving in,

But he is not on the street nor up the hill.

Once again my fancy paints him with that weary load of pain.

On his brow, the first faint traces of decay,

Coming homeward from his labour never to go out again,

Growing paler and more feeble day by day.

Ever cheery, ever hopeful that the worst would soon blow by,

Never sinking 'neath the burden of his ill,

Never fretting nor repining with a downcast doubting eye;

Moving slow along the street and up the hill.

Coming quietly down the roadway I can see him even yet.

Shaking hands with some kind well-wisher the while;

Not the proudest in the village but spoke kindly when they met,

And he answered back their greeting with a smile.

I can see him at the window looking out upon the rain.

When the weary wind blows early and shrill; But the vision passes from me—all is blank and void again,

And he is not on the street nor up the hill.

All that weary, dreary winter, icy-fingered, bleak and grim,

Like a shadow form he flitted to and fro;

And the spring renewed earth's verdure, but no glow returned to him,

Though our blinded eyes were loth to think it so.

And the spring wore into summer, and the fields
grew bare and brown,

And the bees danced with the butterflies at will; Then he sought his little chamber and he quietly laid him down,

Never more to walk the street nor up the hill.

Till his weary soul found refuge, and life's fitful, feeble light

Flickered faintly and went out, and that was all;

For a darkness settled o'er me, and a gloom of blackest night

Closed around my inmost being like a pall,

Till I saw a coffin carried from a closely-curtained room,

Every head was bared and every voice was still; And I saw a band of mourners and a hearse with one white plume

Moving slow along the street and up the hill.

But the dawn of day is breaking, hope lights up my life again,

The weary course of sorrow's night has run;

And the future shines before me after all my woe and pain

Bathed in glory that is brighter than the sun. Life is but a weary turmoil, ended ere 'tis well begun,

Death is but a bless'd relief from care and ill; There's a grand reunion coming when we're gathered one by one

To our rest along the street and up the hill.

## DAVY M'NAIR.

T the auld engine shed at the fit o' the toun,
Wroucht douce, decent Davy M'Nair,
Though he scarce did a day's wark the hale twalmonth roun,

He was always supposed to be there,
To be ready in case o' a smash or breakdoun,
The "Logo," folk keepit him spare.

Till that day the auld "Bloomer" blew up in the

When he drave down the branch and cam' hame never mair.

The men frae their breakfast had newly cam' back, 'Twas a bonnie clear mornin' in Jin,

They were a' in the bothey thrang ca'in the crack, Ere to work they again wad begin,

When down frae the passenger station Tam Jack
The news o' a breakdown brought in.

Baith lines had been blocked, 'twas an awkward affair,

There was naebody hurt, but the damage was sair.

Cam' the foreman to Davy and stated the case, "Ye maun drive to the breakdoun," quoth he,

"But we havens an engine in steam bout the place, Sae ye'll need to try auld thirty-three.

She's no very smooth run, nor fine in the face, But she's safe yet as far's we can see.

Dinna lose ony time, noo, to oil or prepare,

Ye'll be needed, sy, long ere ye get to them there."

A' gaed richt on the road wi' douce Davy, puir man, Till they got ower the brig at the mill, When he drew her up close to the auld water cran,

And had started his boiler to fill.

There were twa on the engine, and ten in the van,
No yin 'mong them a' dreamin' ill.

When the auld boiler burst, and flew up in the air, And was's me what a wreck and a ruin was there.

Dear me, what has come ower oor Davy the nicht,
The auld clock has lang chappit ten;
He said in the morning if a' things gaed richt,
He'd be back hame at six wi' the men.

While if aucht should gang wrang on the road, as they micht,

I wad aye be the first yin to ken.

For the warst he aye said it were best to prepare,

For he'd gang oot some day and come hame never

To my ear as I sit comes the weary nicht win',
Wi' an ominous sough doun the lum,
While the auld window creaks wi' a weird, eerie
din.

And my hairt throbs and beats like a drum.

Wae's me, what a brouch's roon the face o' the mune.

It brings sorrow and sadness to some; Oh! I'm wailin' and wearyin', sadly and sair, For the soun' o' his step at the fit o' the stair.

There's a patter and bustle o' hurryin' feet,
There's a crood at the Station Road-en',
Through the lulls in the win' comes a puir mither's
greet.

And the stronger toned wailings o' men.
But there's naebody thinkin' o' me on the street,
Nae kindly-faced neebour looks ben;
For a puir woman's bodie it's little they care,
Though the licht of her life she may never see mair.

Wha's that? It's the minister, douce hamely man, Aye sae humble, God-fearin', and kin'; I can see by his sad look, sae waefu' and wan, That there's something gane wrang on the Line. That the black cloud at last on this puir hoose has

That we've watched and prepared for lang syne; Oh, God! lend yer ear to a lone woman's prayer, And strengthen the back for the load it must bear.

faun'.

In the auld place o' graves on the face o' the brae,
Hushed to rest by the auld parish bell,
His puir broken body's reposin' this day,
Deaf to a' the ill stories they tell.
Wae's me! were he leevin' nae man wad daur say,
There was nane in the faut but himsel';
Though lang 'neath the sod lies douce Davy M'Nair,
She aye lists for his step on the fit o' the stair.

## THE JAMIESONS.

OT the still born fame, nor the base renown,
Of the noble born of the earth I'll sing,
Where the hero's cross, and the victor's crown,
Decks the breast and the brow of a fameless
thing.

Of kings of a lowlier lot I'll sing,
In a simple lay of the steel-bound line,
A theme that might well grace the heaven-thrill'd
string,

Of a grander harp than this muse of mine.

The morn was fair, and the sun shone down,
And the steam-presst chargers rushed and ran,
When near to the grey old smoke-grimed town,
Two strong arm'd men to their toil began.

To turn up the earth, and to pave and plan,
And the sun climbed high, and the day wore on,
Till their arms and their necks were browned like
tan,

And the sweat on their brows like great beads shone.

Did they dream of the time, as they toiled and sung The grand old strains of a grand old song, When their hopes were bright and their hearts were young.

And the nights were sweet, and the days were long.

And the long rails gleamed like a silver seam,
And the great brown steam gods went and came,
From afar to afar with a shriek and a scream,
With a breath of smoke, and a tongue of flame.

Like huge wild steeds that we dare not tame, Speeding on through the world with a rush and a ring.

Strong souled must he be, and of steel girt frame,
Who would shape out a course for the wild weird
thing.

Till swift into view came the fast coast train, And they all stepp'd aside at the warning sign, When, lo! from her throat came a wail of pain, For right in her path, on the Down Main Line,

Lay a huge square block of a Baltic pine, Was she wrecked? ah, no, like a flash ere she came,

Two men did a deed that will live, and shine, On the topmost line of the scroll of fame.

With a strange wild shout, in the two men sprung, While a strange bright glow in their great eyes shone,

And the great white block from the track was flung, Then a rush, and a roar, and the train sped on.

And the life and the light and the hope had gone

From the home and the hearth of those two
brave men,

That ne'er had a blight nor a dark day known, From the first glad hours of its bliss till then.

And we gathered them up, and we carried them down

To the quiet old street 'mong their kith and their kin:

And we made them a grave in the grey old town, By the time-worn church where we laid them in.

Away from the world with its wildering din,
In the breast of the cold earth hushed and hid;
Would God that we all in this vale of sin
Could do in our deaths what those brave men did.

It is past, it's been told, like an old wife's tale,
'Twas the theme of remark for an hour with
some:

But the poor widows' moan and the children's wail Were unheard in the surge and the ceaseless hum Of the heartless world; but the time will come When the great trump sounds, and each poor crushed frame

Will come out renewed from the mouldering tomb To a grander far than this poor world's fame.

#### TAM TODDY.

N the toun o' Kilbarchan leeved douce Tammas Toddy,

A canny-gaun, hard-working, simple bit body, Aye crackin' and joking, and smirkin' and lauchin'. No an ill word was ere spak' o' him in the clachan. A cairting contractor was Tam's occupation,

Twixt the toun and the railway he plied his voca-

Aye crackin' his whup, and chick, chicking at Jolly, His hardy auld naig, while his faithful broon collie, Aye kept close to his side, keepin' watch and ward o'er him,

Or wad caper and yelp half a stane-cast afore him.

A' the bairns liket "Rab," he was sich a quait cratur.

Like the maister himsel', chockin' fou' o' guid natur.

Tam never was seen in the clachan without him,

Where the weans in hauf-hunners wad gether aboot
him

When a' ither dugs wad grow crusty and fyket,
They could tumble and row about "Rab" as they
liket.

They wad pu' by the heid, by the leg, and the lug o' him.

Till ye'd thoucht they wad made something else than a dug o' him. But weans will be weans, and douce "Rab" seemed aware o't,

And he ne'er gied a yelp, or a bark, made the mair' o't.

'Mong the dugs in the clachan there was na anither, When "Rab" and his freens were forgethered together,

While for drivin' the business, his equal was never.

He could canvass for orders, collect, and deliver,

Wi' the load o' a man through the toun he could warsel.

He could tak' oot a letter, and bring in a parcel, And on Fair nichts when Tam wi' the beer was a waster,

He could drive hame the mare just as weel as his master.

But nae matter how usefu', ilk dug has his day o't, And the best freens must pairt spite o' a' folk may say o't.

A' gaed smoothly alang till ae day aboot Lammas, For a cart load o' stuff to oor station cam' Tammas Chick, chickin', awa' at his auld grey naig Jolly, Attended, as usual, by douce "Rab," the collie. Since first in the business the trio had started, "Twad hae taen a queer chiel to tell what they had carted.

When the charges for carriage Tam duly had pey'd in,

He started to fill frae a truck in the sidin',

While "Rab" he fell in, wi' a curly-haired brither, And awa' they gaed chasin yin after the ither,

Up the lyes, 'mang the trucks, they gaed racin' and huntin'.

Rinnin' hairbreadth escapes where the pilot was shuntin',

Till "Rab" weel endowed wi' a gleg observation, Saw the "up line" fast mail hauf-a-mile frac the station.

And made off there and then, as Tam said "like a fool man".

To see if he couldna keep pace wi' the "Pullman."

Though he did a' he could, every nerve of him strainin',

He could see frae the first that the steam-horse was gainin';

And wi' wisdom ye scarce could expect frae a dumb thing,

He saw he'd be beat if he didna try something.

So he made a dash in at the last wheel to stop her.

When in less than a turn o't puir "Rab" was a cropper.

On heedless and heartless the busy train thundered, While Tam stood and watched it completely dumfoundered;

Then slowly extending his tunnel mouth spacious, Gave vent to one great, solemn mouthfu', "My

gracious."

He then ran to the place, there was little to rin for, Lang before he could reach him the puir dug was din' for.

He mournfully stood o'er his poor friend bewailing, 'Twas a murder wholesale, that was not worth retailing.

Tam mourned for his dug, as if't had been a brither, In their comin' and gangin' they'd lang been thegether.

"Eicht ears 'twas," he said, makin' sair lamentation,
"Since he first brocht him in a bit pup to the station,

He'd jump'd oot, he'd jumped in, owre each stane and each dyke o't,

But get killed wi' the 'Pullman,' he'd ne'er din' the like o't."

"Eicht 'ears," quo' Will Watson, the goods porter, winkin',

"Ere he does it again 'twill be langer, I'm thinkin'."

# **ШІГГІМ МОКТОМ.**

AR away from home and kindred,
Where the tall pines towering rise,
Far beyond the broad Atlantic,
'Neath the new world's changing skies,
In his long and dreamless slumber,
William Morton lowly lies,

Tall and active, strong and stately,
Kindly-hearted, fair, and young.
Sweet among his native woodlands,
Were the plaintive songs he sung,
Singing ever at his labour,
Till the very echoes rung.

To my vision fancy paints him,
Decked with many a laurel now,
Ne'er a smarter horseman ever
Placed a helmet on his brow,
Surer never drove a reaper,
Firmer never held a plough.

Man with all his nobler feelings,
Is but mortal at the best,
Ever changing dreams and fancies,
Coursing through his brain and breast,
Filled with honest aspirations,
William Morton sought the West.

There upon the line he laboured, Full of hope he seemed to be, Loved by all his fellow-workers, Ever cheerful, frank, and free, Few of all the men around him Did their work as well as he.

Only we who live and labour
On the busy rail can feel
How the dread destroying angel
On his forehead set the seal,
Tossed among the ruthless waggons,
Mangled by the gory wheel.

Only we who live and labour
On the busy line can tell,
Of that awful moment's anguish
Ere he loosed his grasp and fell,
Ere the swift revolving circles
Caught and crushed him like a shell.

Through the gloom that sunk around him,
Deepening like the dying day,
Sounds of sweet familiar voices
Whispered to him where he lay,
Bringing visions of the dear ones
In the old home far away.

Vain were human arts to aid him, Ebbed life's current all too fast, Soon the weary war was ended, Soon the pangs and pains were past, Strangers' faces bending o'er him, William Morton breathed his last.

Where a tall pine's spreading branches All around a shadow throws, Came a band of rugged mourners, Kindly-hearted strangers those; There they laid his mangled body To its long and last repose.

Far away from kith and kindred,
Stricken in his strength and bloom,
Broken on the wheel of labour,
All alone he met his doom,
No loved one to share his sorrow,
Buried in a stranger's tomb.

Strangers, brothers, to repay you, Helpless in this world are we; But the time will come, God speed it, When your grand reward will be. "What ye did to him a stranger, Ye have also done to Me."

Far away from home and kindred
Where the tall pines towering rise,
Far beyond the broad Atlantic,
'Neath the new world's changing skies,
In his long and dreamless slumber,
William Morton lowly lies,

#### H PENNY H MILE.

N this wide world of ours naught but cares do we see,

It's a rug and a tug frae we're born till we dee.
To live weary life out it were scarce worth our while,
Were we not help'd along at a penny a mile.

For bustle, for business, for pleasure or play, The railway stands foremost by far and away, Where millions each minute in ceaseless defile, Pass the turnstyles of life at a penny a mile.

Opposition they say is the backbone of trade, The adage held good till the metals were laid, For the wheels of their 'busses' twad scarce provide "ile."

Yet we live and grow fat at a penny a mile.

What would old stagers think of our new-fangled ways,

When a run round the world is a matter of days, From the wilds of the West to the banks of the Nile, It is done to the tune of a penny a mile.

It's a queer change that's come o'er the old-fashioned mode,

When the man with the means held the rights of the road, When the auld coach came round only once in a while,

It was something more then than a penny a mile.

Then the rich man drove past in his coach at full sail,

While the poor man crept on with his load like a snail,

Now the rag-picker's wife and my lady of style, Ride their coaches alike at a penny a mile.

Nationality's nothing, nor colour, nor skin, Come nigger, come Norseman, we bundle them in, Brisk Monsieur from Paris, bould Pat from the Isle, Find a place side by side at a penny a mile.

Here's a sweep dressed in white at a two-handed crack,

With a floury-tongued baker in sable and black, While a priest with a felt and a rogue with a tile, Are made equal for once at a penny a mile.

Here's a skinny-faced stockbroker never content When the dividend paid's below fifty per cent, Though off shares and such like he has made up a pile,

He aye rides at the cheapest, a penny a mile.

Ever grasping and grabbing, and never at ease, And the more you oblige him the worse he's to please,

They're the last to give praise, and the first to revile,

Who have drawn the most grist from a penny a mile.

## OUR CHIEF ENGINEER.

OU will marvel, I know, that our Chief should bestow

Such attention and care upon me; Not a fig am I worth on the face of the earth, And what wonder, at eighty-and-three.

Yet when Railways were young, I was hardy and strong,

And could tackle the best of them all:
But man's vigour is brief, had it not been our Chief,
I'd have gone long ere this to the wall.

'Tis some years now, I guess, since the morning express,

Was started 'twixt here and Carlisle:
The time we'd to go was some two hours or so—
At a minute or so to the mile.

Which with old "92" we could easily do, Newly built was she then, tight and trim; Jack French was my mate, when I think of him yet, I had never a stoker like him.

If I said a sharp word, when detention occurred,
With a joke, Jack would laugh the thing o'er;
While he prized more than life that sweet gem of a
wife

He had married some summers before.

Ay! and well might he prize, in those clear azure eyes.

Love's light like a beacon did burn; How she smiled, the dear heart, when she saw him

depart, How she joyed when she saw him return. There was never on earth seen a cosier hearth,
Or two lives so unclouded and clear;
Not the least of their joy was that sunny-haired
boy,

Who now is our Chief Engineer.

I can picture again how my old mother then, Kept a motherly eye on the pair; For Jane was not strong when the baby was young, And took ill with our smoke-poisoned air.

'Twould have been, I much doubt, but a sorry lookout.

Without her to encourage and cheer;

'Twas a kindness, they said, could not well be repaid,

By aught they could do for us here.

But she's gone to the mould, and though now grey and old.

There's a voice in my heart tells me so: That in regions above, for this kindness and love, She's been tenfold repaid long ago.

Well as time sped along, the dear fellow grew strong, Not a healthier boy could you see; When we came into sight, he would meet us at night, And walk home 'twixt his father and me.

Till that terrible day when I took him away,
I'd been under a promise awhile,
When the warm days were come, to take him from
home,

On a trip all the way to Carlisle.

With the airs of a king stood the sunny-haired thing, In his new-made dress, tidy and trim; Oh, a mother ne'er smiled on a happier child, Or fondled a sweeter than him.

Jack was sadder, if aught, than his usual I thought,
With a far-away look in his eye:
But the most of our lives with dull moments are
fraught,

Which an hour at the most will blow by.

His face lacked the smile it had aye worn erewhile, And he spoke in a strange listless way:

When I mentioned the little one's trip to Carlisle, He fain would have said to it—nay!

"For my mind," he replied, "with forebodings is rife.

Though I know naught that should us annoy;
Still, how worthless would life be to me and my
wife,

Should a mishap occur to our boy.

"Though I long to be rid of such fancies as these,
And have tried hard—they will not away;
For my mind's ill at case, and so \_\_Rill\_if you please.

For my mind's ill at ease, and so—Bill, if you please, I would rather not take him to-day."

To the risks we'd to make he was keenly awake, And the ills that might hourly befall;

As for me, I scarce thought, having nothing at stake While with him he had simply all.

I was free and unbound by such ties, to be sure, And was rash, when I think on it now: But my motives were pure, for I could not endure Bringing gloom to the little one's brow.

So a promise I made—not a hair of his head Would be harmed, were he trusted to me— For I'd rather lose time on the journey, I said, Than cloud for a moment his glee.

After starting-time, fully three minutes we stood,
Which I thought for our run augured ill;
While strive on as we would, doing all that we could,
We lost other three climbing the hill.

There was something, I felt, with the engine not right,

She must somehow be losing her steam; Jack had never been guilty of firing light, No blame, I felt, rested with him.

I examined her o'er, underneath and before, But nothing amiss could I find; Yet when rounding the ridge at the Seven-arch Bridge,

We were over eight minutes behind.

After that she improved, we got on pretty free,
And ran time, with a few minutes o'er;
We cleared off some three, at the long Bridge of
Dee,

And next section would give us two more.

Clear-signall'd on to it, we thundering sped,
With a clear run before us for miles;
I had just patted Jack's little boy on the head,
Who had answered me back with his smiles.

When, "Heavens!" cried Jack, with a face like a sheet,

As our engine dashed clear of the woods;
"What is that?" with a shout I had sprung from
my seat.

"My God! 'tis a broken-down 'goods.'"

I pulled back the lever, Jack flew to the brake, But 'twas useless, the thing was so near; Ere the turn of a wheel from our speed we could take,

With fierce force we dashed into their rear.

No judgment or forethought by any were shown, All was muddle, confusion, and mess: Not a hand-flag was out, or fog-signal set down, To warn the approaching Express.

'Twas against all authority, practice, and rules,
Which on this head is pointed and strong,
That the guards had both gone to the engine, like
fools,

To see what had with it gone wrong.

How I got off so light in that terrible smash,
Heaven knows, for I never could tell;
I've some faint recollection of hearing a crash,
As I spun from the footplate, and fell

On a heap of loose rubbish, some twenty yards off, Which I struck with impetuous force: But, though stunned for a moment, and shaken enough,

It might well been a thousand times worse.

"Where's Jack and his boy?" were the first words
I said,

As I rushed off in sorrowful quest;

'Neath a part of the tender we found him crushed dead,

With his boy clasped all safe to his breast.

How I carried him home and the sad tidings broke, I could not explain though I tried;

But the poor mother daily sunk under the shock, And she left us her boy when she died.

Though there was not a drop of our blood in his veins,

All that parents could do have we done; We rejoiced in his joys, and felt keenly his pains, He was more to us far than a son.

But my mother's long gone, where I'll soon follow

As my days must be soon numbered here; Yet my heart's always glad when I think of the lad, Who now is our Chief Engineer.

## HUCHTERARDER.

THE Summer sun was blazing down, In new-born glory beaming; When into Auchterarder toon, The morning Mail came steaming.

A London tourist, by my word,
'Twas something new to see yin,
Yet here he was, as proud's a Lord,
But, mercy, what a wee yin.

An advertisement sent forsooth,
By fashions tailor branded;
A long-jawed, empty-headed youth,
And just as empty-handed.

The hills he sought in quiet and ease,
His shaky nerves to steady;
By Jove! the bracing morning breeze
Had done him good already.

It filled him full of pith and pace,
From toe to Tam o' Shanter,
He could have run a ten-mile race,
And won it in a canter.

"By George this is the place for me, Its perfect elevating,"
"Hey, porter there," he cried in glee,
"Isn't this invigorating."

Jock didn't rightly catch the soun',
He thought he meant the station,
And that he had got landed doun
At some wrang destination.

"Jump in," he cried, "or else ye'll miss Yer train, yer gangin' farder, Its no 'Invigoration' this, It's only Auchterarder."

## LIFE IS SWEET.

FIFE is sweet! Behold our weaking Slowly wasting in decline; Slowly wasting in decline; From those eyes that stare so strangely What a weird glow seems to shine! Hear the hopeful words he utters, Every accent breathed in pain; "If the wind would change a little All might soon be well again." Grim and gaunt, the fell disease Is sapping life's foundations fleet; Yet, though wearing out by inches, Hopes he ever—life is sweet!

Life is sweet! The new-made mother Longs to die yet hopes to live; Clinging to her sapless bosom
For the life she cannot give,
Lies the new-born—sinless, stainless—
One short hour of earth to see;
Far too tiny for an angel,
Yet God wills it so to be.
They have passed the golden gateway,
Up the marble-templed street,
To the realms of God and glory.
Life eternal, oh! how sweet.

Life is sweet! Behold the kingly
Form whose nod laid thousands low;
Where are all the glided glories
That were his an hour ago?
He whose voice made empires tremble;
He who held the world in thrall,
Shorn of all his tinsel trappings,
Only mortal after all:

How the awful gulf appals him;
Vain the prayers he would repeat—
"All my millions for a moment!"
Surely life is very sweet.

Life is sweet! To earth's poor toilers,
Heedless of the pangs they feel;
Knocked down by the thundering engine
Mangled by the grinding wheel;
Borne into that cheerless chamber—
Bleeding, helpless, senses dim—
Where the greedy knives of Science
Cut and sever limb from limb;
Yet they live, and battle through it;
Still goes on life's fitful beat;
To their poor, bruised, broken beings
Hope is life, and life is sweet.

# RODGERSON'S DOUG.

No oor famed sugar city o' tierces and bags,
Wi' its rich folk in satins and puir folk in rags,
Where it's mud to the ankles frae July to June,
Where the rain only stops for the snaw to begin,
Where the sailors prepare for the weather in store
Wi' a dip in the sea as they're coming ashore,
If ye've time for a meenit to len' me yer lug,
Ye will hear o' a dweller in't—Rodgerson's doug,

Since the new Ayrshire line to the West End was made,

He's been yin o' that great railway's little unpaid; His hale heart and min' seem sae fixed on the wark That he scarce can get time for a freen'ly bit bark. Nae maiter what pairt o' the yaird he may be, If yer gaun up the hill or awa' roon' the quay, You jist point to the break bogie, up gangs each lug, And he's in't in a twinklin'—Rodgerson's doug. Though he's no up to much wi' the pencil or pen, Nor yet shown on the pay-sheet alang with the men, No a haun' in the wark's half sac constant as he, He's as sharp as a razor in baith ear and e'e. He can staun' like a man, he can jump, he can skiim.

'Twad be tellin' us a' were we active like him;
No a shift o' the waggons or shunt wi' the pug,
But what's seen and taen note o' by Rodgerson's
doug.

He's oot like a lark at the break o' daylicht,
And he never leaves off till the latest at nicht;
He's no like a wheen o' yer sleepy-heid folk,
He's as sharp to the hour as the haun' o' a clock.
It's a quite common thing wi' the best workin' men,
Frr a yardsman or guard to sleep in noo and then;
Till the breakfast bell rings they the blankets may
hug,

But we ne'er kent him sleepin' in-Rodgerson's doug.

Nue maiter what happens, he hears and sees a',
Could he speak, he could tell us a story or twa;
He could tell when the "bothy" was burned, and
the hoo.

Where the whisky cam' frae that filled Gaffer Gibb fou;

Hoo the casks o' molasses were knockit agee,
And hoo the goods waggons got into the sea.
Nae amount o' rough shuntin', nae quick stop or rug
E'er knock'd oot o' the break bogie—Rodgerson's
doug.

O' the men's dinner pieces he'll eat a' ye bring, But he wadna taste drink gin ye made him a king; Na, faith, he kens better than pree siccan stuff, Wi' the food God provides he's contented enough. When I look at the dougie I think noo and then That he's gifted wi' wisdom far mair than some men, And the world wad hae less o' turmoil and humbug If some men had the judgment o' Rodgerson's doug.

## SHUNTED FOR THE MAIL.

ERE, take a seat beside me, Bob, let's have a

You brakesmen have a nasty job, there's no denying that—

A moment's pause, a sudden slip, when coupling off or on.

And once within that iron grip there's little mercy shown.

If times were bad of which you speak they now are even more,

Tom Jones got crushed the other week, and Brown not long before;

There's scarce a day goes past but some get badly hurt or killed,

So common have such things become our hearts are fairly chilled,

But time and years have failed to throw their dusky, sombre veil,

O'er that which happened long ago when Jackson drove the Mail.

Swift o'er my head a score of years since then have passed away,

Yet to my mind the scene appears as clear as yesterday;

Such scenes, engraved once on the heart, can never know decay,

Though forced we are to act life's part however far away:

Though many a truly saddening sight my memory can recall,

The scenes of that long byegone night can far o'ershadow all.

'Twas when we ran the Midland "goods" from College to Carlisle,

In fancy still my memory broads on every well-known mile,

That nightly we went bowling o'er to reach fair Carron vale,

Where usually we shunted for the passing of the Mail.

Jack Gordon was our brakesman then, he well his part could act,

No doubt we've had some able men, but very few like Jack;

He was a steady careful lad, so cautious I may say, That oft for months we never had even a breakaway:

His eye was sharp, his brain was clear, no duty would he shrink,

A readier-handed brakesman ne'er put hand on hook or link,

And many a time when waiting on the shunters to complete

The marshalling of our train, his van was such a quiet retreat,

Where twenty times he would relate that everlasting tale

How one named Kate would nightly wait our shunting for the Mail.

And as we started, oft he would impress upon my mind

The lecturing I was in for should I reach that place behind,

For there she patiently would wait in evening's shadows dim,

Half-hid beyond the garden gate, but never hid to him.

What little (ime we had he spent with Kate to laugh and ncd,

While we into the siding went or shunted through the road;

There at the shrine of love he paid those vows he kept so well—

How much he loved that gentle maid is more than I can tell!

But time rolled on as we bowled on, and ere the year grew pale,

Jack won a heart, but lost his own, when shunting for the Mail.

Oh! what a blessed halo bright around their beings shone,

As neared the time that would unite their paths through life in one;

Each hour that chased each hour along seemed joy succeeding joy,

No whisper seemed to breathe of wrong nor tinge of earth's alloy;

But Time as on he held his course soon burst the pleasing spell,

And o'er her life with fearful force an awful shadow fell.

But such is life, the cup we think all gladness to the brim,

Is poisoned even as we drink, and so it was with him; Unseen, unfelt by all, a blight wound round us like a veil,

Far blacker than the blackest night, when shunting for the Mail.

Just ere she passed us through the gloom I saw, or seemed to see,

A something like a shadow come between her lights and me—

My God! was that a man, I said, and quickly made my way

To where a formall pale and dead right in the fourfoot lay.

The horrors of that awful night I still in fancy feel, There lay poor Jack, a ghastly sight, crushed by the grinding wheel. I brushed from off his brow the hair by blood and ashes stained,

Of all the life that once was there no single spark remained:

His blood was scattered o'er the track, on sleeper, chair, and rail—

Those eyes of Kate's so dazzled Jack he had not seen the Mail.

# THE RIVAL GRADIENTS.

TWA natives o' a Hielan' toun,
To Glesca' cam' a trip last simmer;
Where, at the novel sichts aroun',
They took a week to glower and glimmer.

Twa thicker-heided, rougher cowts, I'm sure were never seen thegither; As stupid as twa Hielan' knowts, The yin was greener than the ither.

Frae some queer corner in Caithness,
Oor worthy freen's had cam' the hale way,
Determined not to work, unless
They got a job aboot the Railway.

A kintra chap on railways here Gets on far readier than a toun yin, Sae Mac got on at Brig o' Weir, And Angus started on the Union.

And ae nicht no lang after that,

To gang somehow they'd baith occasion,
To Paisley, and as luck wad hae't,

They met thegither at the Station.

Richt prood was Angus, sae was Mac,
And haun's were shook in freen'ly greetin',
While Angus, eager for the crack,
Extolled the unexpected meetin'.

"It's lang," quo' he, "since I had yin, My throat's grown perfect dry and husky, Sae here's a dram shop, we'll gang in And ha'e a talk and taste o' whusky."

For crackin', baith were in rare tid, They mony a merry set related, If yin cam' oot wi' something guid, The ither yin was sure to beat it.

The whusky thewed their Hielan' bluid,
The Line 'mong ither things was mooted,
Ye'd thought they'd been on't since the flood,
Sae much they bounced and blaw'd aboot it.

Yin praised the shovel, yin the pick,
Yin's road was steep, the ither's steeper,
The tartan fairly got the kick,
It stood nae chance wi' rail and sleeper.

Mac's road was awfu' uphill wark,
The length that he was workin' next to
Was like the riggin' o' a kirk,
The gradients on't were yin in sixty.

"Sixty," pooh'd Angus, frae his side,
"There's noucht in that to gar yin wunner,
Man, on the line where I'm employed,
The gradient's yin in every hunner,"

## HIS LAST RUN.

The guard will miss his homeward run;
Two weary hours he needs must wait,
When half a minute would have done;
But such is life beneath the sun,
Chained to the iron wheels of fate,
Mankind must come and go and wait.

The coming train with headlights clear,
The going train with tail-lights red,
Together all at once appear—
They pass each other at the shed;
But hush! what ominous words of dread
Are on the night air whispered,
The guard has missed his run. He's dead!

What! Is he dead? It cannot be, I saw him but an hour ago, As light of heart, as frank, as free A man as one might care to know; And yet I've oftimes seen laid low, The stoutest and the stateliest men, With none to question how or when.

What! Dead? The man we knew so long, Whose doings brought him evil fame, Whose one dark vice, uncurbed and strong, Impelled him on to deeds of shame, In life corrupt, in death the same; And yet they say who seem to know, God in his mercy wills it so.

"The doom was written," so they say,
The man must die, his hour had come,
No matter in what place or way,
In labour's field or quiet at home,
No matter how or where he roam.

Come when it will or how it may Man must the summons stern obey.

We saw him in his strength and bloom,
Go forth in his accustomed way,
We found him in the night's dark gloom,
When death had parted soul and clay,
A bleeding wreck behold he lay,
How calm and still his placid brow,
That throbbed with being even now.

Though underneath him teemed, and pent
With living hundreds sped the train,
No kindly form was o'er him bent
To soothe him in his awful pain,
And lead him back to God again,
Through the dark vale, death's dread unknown
He went his weary way alone.

No fear of God was in the man,
His heart was very vile they say,
Or he had never left his van,
From God and duty's path array,
Struck down red-handed in the fray.
God help the doomed in such an hour,
When evil passions prove their power.

What took him there we cannot tell, We only know 'twas wrongly done, We only know he sinned and fell, The rest is hid with God alone, Till loud the awful trump is blown, That tolls the knell of grey-eyed time In every land, and sea, and clime.

But wherefore prate with ceaseless din,
Or rashly speak of him that's gone.
Nay, bring the man who ne'er did sin,
And let him cast the foremost stone.
If such a mortal here is known,
Let him come forth with victor's tread,
And glory o'er the lowly dead.



## PIW IW IN BELOW WHE DOOR.

N oor auld upland Ayrshire toon lived kindlyhearted John M'Lean;

As postman to the clachans roun' he mony a fifty miles had gane;

Wi' big blue coat up owre his lugs, and bannet weel doon owre his een,

It micht rain very cats and dogs, John didna seem to care a preen.

He didna care a button hoo, or when, or where the win' micht blaw,

Though shouchs and burns were roarin' fu', or a' the roads knee-deep in snaw.

Fed on guid brose and oaten cakes, wi' noo and then a canny dram,

John cared na for yer almanacks, he took the weather as it cam'.

The wintry sho'er micht pelt and pour, the bitin' blast micht rage and roar,

He aye appeared prompt to the 'oor at every residenter's door.

Come o' a stern auld Scottish breed, John took queer notions o' his ain,

And when yin got into his head, 'twas ill to drive it oot again.

A' got the same cast, big and wee, nae maitter when they chanced to meet,

'Twas 'gainst a' postal rules to gi'e oot letters on the open street.

A letter on the street! Na, feth, he wadna dun't to save yer life:

Nor leave't for love nor money with yer verra nextdoor neebour wife. The minister might gloom and glare, the provost o' the place look grim,

John didna care, his letters were a' lords alike to sich as him,

If he'd been asked I'm sure by yin, he had been ask'd by mony a score,

To put, when naebody was in, their letters through below the door.

Swear if ye like, or flyte or beg, or saftly lay the butter on,

For a' he wadna move a peg, the rules were always rules wi' John.

He never yet was kent to flinch, when he 'boot oucht had taen a stan';

He wadna budge a single inch for ony livin' mortal man.

Na, na, he owre his specks wad say, sich kittle wark 'll no be dune;

Just bide at hame yersel', or has somebody there to tak' them in.

Yin said he'd grease his luif for't yet, anither swore him for a mule,

But bribe or threat, they ne'er could get him ever yince to break his rule.

Though whiles he used baith han' and fit, and losin' patience sometimes swore.

He never yet was kent to pit a letter through below the door.

A' things gaed smoothly till ae day some foreign folk cam' to the toun

Frae some queer kintra far away, to tak' a hoose an settle doon.

When a' was flitted, kists and clocks, and ither gear stowed safe and dry,

Their letters cam' like ither folks, which John hand'd in as he gaed by.

The number and the street he ken'd, but mair than that he never knew.

For sich a queer name ne'er was pen'd, 'twad split twa tongues to spelled it thro';

- But, faith, they kept him unca thrang, ten letters every day if yin,
- Though he cared nocht for that as lang as folk were there to tak' them in ;
- Though lang o' openin' aft were they, their slowness
  John wi' patience bore,
- Till yin skirled frae inside ae day, "Jist pit it in below the door."
- "Na, na," quo' John, "I'll never pit them there nae maitter wha ye be;
- Open the door or keep it shut, ye needna think to thraw wi' me;
- Ye'll fin yer wrang for yince, I fear ; sich cheek nae mortal ever saw ;
- Keepin' a Queen's man waitin' here is pure transgression o' the law."
- He rang again wi' a' his micht, gied wi' his knee the door a ding,
- But deil a face cam' e'er in sicht in answer to his knock and ring.
- John kennin' there was some yin in, nae langer could their nonsense thole;
- He swore he'd mak' the hinges spin, and draw the badgers oot their hole.
- To gar them open lang he tried, he chappit, kicket, cursed, and swore,
- But aye the lazy rascal cried, "Confoond ye, pit it below the door."
- Again John shook the door wi' din, when "Police! murder! police! oh!"
- In awfu' shrieks cam' frae within, proclaiming some dark deed o' woe.
- His verra hair stood up on en'. A murder! mercy, could it be?
- And yet they say it's awfu' when thae foreign bodies tak' a spree,
- They fecht like teegers on the sly, and bark and bite the hale 'ear through;
- They'd kill a human bein', ay, as fast's a butcher kills a soo.

Wi' face like paper aff he ran, nor stoppit till he'd searched the town,

And found the Heilan' policeman, wha wi' a crood cam' rinnin' down.

The murder still was goin' on, the cries were louder than before.

Wi' noo and then a waefu' groan, and "Pit it in below the door."

The "peg" was puzzled, kent na what to dae or hoo'if should be done;

Wi' dae ye this and dae ye that, the crowd began to hound him on.

Yin kent it a', the drunken sot had kicked his helpless wife to daith;

While yin distinctly heard a shot, for truth o' which he'd gi'e his aith;

Some said he'd been transported twice, been twenty times in jail forby;

Some said 'twas like a woman's voice, some ithers 'twas a bairnie's cry;

Ithers maintained the "peg" was fear'd, his heart, they said, was cauld as airn,

Or he had lang ere this, they jeered, dang in the door and saved the bairn.

Responding to their jeering shout, he smashed the door until it fell,

Which quickly let the murder out. Good gracious, what an awful sell!

A parrot in the lobby hung, amazed at a' the wild uproar,

Received them with stentorian lung, "Just pit it in below the door."

## EL DORADO.

RE morn's first beams in glory grand lit up with light the bay,

To seek for Eldorado's land, five boatmen rowed

A sluggard of the slowest kind, in all things hard to please,

Was one, whose heart and soul and mind were filled with dreams of ease.

Impelled by love, one sought to rove for one bright being fair,

The world he fled that he might wed the reigning beauty there.

One filled with aspiration strong, a weary fight had fought,

The bubble reputation long and vainly had he sought; Burned in his breast a wild unrest, ambition's quenchless flame.

In eager haste the storm he faced, his bark was bound for Fame.

A miser one, who long had run a greedy race for gold,

A prey to want, long-visaged, gaunt, and prematurely old:

Unpaid he left his debts behind, and crept away by stealth,

A starved wretch of human kind, down millstoned with his wealth;

He packed it all in haste abrupt, secure he longed to feel,

Where neither moth nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

One poor man let his burden fall, the friends he left were few,

The dark grave long had covered all the hopes he ever knew;

A humble being from his birth, he lived through life content.

With nothing came he to the earth, with nothing now he went:

His treasure lay afar away beyond the stretching

A pilgrim here for many a year, he now was bound for home.

Away they sped with constant stroke, the land was left afar.

Past many a jagged reef and rock, o'er many a coral

Till not a dot, nor point, nor spot appeared to dim the view.

Stretched far and wide on either side the boundless ocean blue.

Till lo! before their wondering eyes appeared a whirling pool,

Lit up with all the rainbow's dyes, and strangely beautiful.

Deep in its vortex circling lay wealth of worlds untold.

But fairest round its outer ring a massive cup of

One eager mark'd it whirl amain, it pleased his fancy so.

His heart was filled with thoughts of gain, and loth to let it go:

"Away all doubts and fears," he said, "ye cannot me alarm.

The brave are they who know not dread, the very risk is charm."

He reached him o'er and grasped the bowl with eager hands and eyes-

Alas, poor man, to stake his soul for such a hollow prize:

The gem that seemed so pure and grand was but a bubble fair.

That burst when touched by mortal hand, and spent itself in air.

No strength of his was equal found to stay the wayward keel,

The circling eddies caught him, round revolving like a wheel:

Too late! too late! his eerie wail was heard above its roar,

How many seek to find, yet fail, the Eldorado's shore.

Still on they sped with steady sweep, their bending oars they play,

When lo! a derelict of the deep came drifting down their way-

A monster galleon heaped and stored with wealth from every zone,

With ne'er a single soul on board to claim it for his own.

One boatman stopped him in his course, and climbed its rugged side,

That long had stood the brunt and force of many a storm-tossed tide.

Awe struck, amazed at sight so grand, he gazed in wonder wild

On treasures gleaned from many a land, in grim confusion piled—

Spoils from the depths of ocean vast shone sparkling from her hold,

While every rail and spar and mast seemed sheathed with purest gold.

He paced her deck with stately tread, strange visions thrilled him through—

"Farewell, my toiling friends," he said, "I go no more with you;

No more the ways will round me beat, nor billows

No more the waves will round me beat, nor billows round me roar;

With all those treasures at my feet, what need I wish for more?

Why should I longer toil and search, here's wealth enough for me"—

The gilded monster gave a lurch, and sunk, and so did he.

Unruffled, free, the heartless sea shone peaceful as before-

No more a weary pilgrim he for Eldorado's shore.

Still higher clomb the great round sun, while hotter grew the day,

Like glass beneath the great sea lone, in glistening glory lay,

Till bathed in light before their sight rose near them on their lee.

'Neath moonday's smile, as fair an isle as ever man might see:

Fair summer's glory glowed and gleamed from shrub, and bush, and tree,

A very easis it seemed on that great waste of sea.

In nature's gayest garb was dressed each wood, and glen, and hill:

But fairer far than all the rest, a music murmuring

For many a countless day and year the tiny thing had run.

A crystal streak that glistened clear like silver in

"Oh! stay my brothers here awhile and rest your limbs," said one,

"The blood within me seems to boil beneath the scorching sun;

My tongue is burned a sapless thing, my throat is parched and dry,

Go on who will, I'll taste the spring, and join you by and bye."

He bathed his burning brow and feet, and drank from pool to pool,

No nectar draught was e'er so sweet, or so refreshing

The richest fruits around him hung, or down in clusters fell-

Oh, what a fairy realm, he sung, in dreamy bliss to dwell.

In quiet and ease 'mong scenes like these, unfettered and alone.

The wayward wind played through the trees, and still he wandered on:

When from the wood in search of blood came fiends in form of men;

A well-poised dart went to his heart, they slew him there and then.

Lured by the light that leads astray, down stricken, swift and sore,

His bleaching bones lie far away from Eldorado's shore.

Noon passed, the day wore on apace, the wind began to blow,

An anxious look crept o'er each face, their boats were labouring so;

When through the storm a dauntless form, a tiny bark rowed nigh,

As fair a dame as ever came to tempt a mortal eye.

One of the two who now remained laid down his heavy oar—

His weary limbs were racked and strained, his hands were blistered sore.

Entranced, as if some magic spell her charm had o'er him flung,

He eager drank the strains that fell from off her syren tongue—

"I give your wealth, I give you fame, a heritage, a home,

With all the joys that man can name, if you will only come."

Exclaimed the raptured boatman then, while joy lit up his brow,

"What is their price, enjoy them when?" She answered, "nought and now;

The great vast tide is deep and wide, death lurks in every wave;

Come, wherefore miss a prize like this?" He took the hand she gave.

"Farewell, my dear old friend," he said; "toil on if yet you may."

Across the deep they lightly sped, away, still on, away,

When sudden o'er the waters played a cloud of darker hue;

Down sunk the bark, down sunk the maid, and weary boatman too.

No longer he, light limbed and free, will ply the bending oar;

With cold, dull eyes, far down he lies, from Eldorado's shore.

Left last of all, the poor man plied with feeble stroke the oar,

"Oh! if the night should come," he sighed, "before I reach the shore—"

The east was changed to grey, and dun, to crimson turned the west.

Down through whose glowing bars the sun went wading to his rest,

Then sombre night, with baited breath, her darkening folds let fall,

And stillness, deeper far than death, sank slowly over all,

Out of those inky blackness forms rose miraged on the mind,

Strange, weird-like shapes, that tell when storms are gathering in the wind.

Unchained at last down swept the blast in frenzied fury wild,

Till the broad sea seemed one great vast of watery mountains piled,

No pause, no rest, still on he press'd, when lo! above the foam

A tiny spark shone through the dark—the welcome light of home.

No strength of winds could crush or kill the hope that lit his soul,

Though swamped and sinking, onward still he grappled for the goal—

Unfettered by a single fear, not all that turmoil there

Could drown from God's all-hearing ear, the still small voice of prayer.

When lo! before his ravished sight, with dazzling strength and power,

Eternal light broke through the night from Salem's beacon tower,

Burst into song God's angel throng, and still'd the breakers roar—

All sorrows past, home safe at last on Eldorado's shore.

## THE SHIPWRECK.

ALL night long the howling tempest in his frenzied fury bore,

All night long his white-plumed columns rushed and broke upon the shore,

Baffled, beaten, back returning, flercer, wilder, than before.

Hush! what means that ominous echo, wakes the slumberer in affright,

Up his chamber window creeping seems & strangely lurid light,

Weird-like shapes and eerie shadows sweep athwart the brow of night.

Many a toil-worn son of labour peering from his lowly pane,

Marks the ruddy glare and seeks it, heedless of the storm and rain,

While he of the crimson curtains creeps away to dream again.

Oh! the wind that raves and rushes, oh! the rain that blinds and beats,

Slates, and tiles, and leads, and roofings, shattered, scattered through the streets;

Morning breaks, and gazing seawards, what a scene the vision meets.

Through the shifty misty curtain spread above the foam-fringed bay,

Strange weird spectral forms seem hovering o'er dark Ailsa far away.

Giant Goatfell still in slumber wrapt in regal robes of grey.

Towering 'twixt them miles of mountains, heaving, hissing, far and free,

Tattered rags, and broken wreckage, strewn with many a hope to be,

Never in the mind of mortal was there seen so wild a sea.

How it roars, and how it rushes, hither, thither, as it wills,

Booming like a thousand thunders, rolling 'mong the rocks and hills,

Till the very life blood coursing through our being throbs and thrills.

In the distance, dimly-pictured, through the blinding sleet and squall,

Lo! appears a frail barque drifting under bare poles, gaunt and tall,

Driving on to sure destruction right against the Northern Wall.

Helpless all we stand beholding, mute and speechless, weak, and wan,

"Doomed," the faintly muttered whisper passes round from man to man;

God may bring her safely through it, human effort never can.

Vain! she strikes, a crash of timbers echoes ominous through the air,

Fiercer shrieks the tempest, pregnant with the wailing of despair,

Where is now the heaven-blessed lifeboat? vainly, echo answers, where?

Where is he whose voice and daring kindled valour like a flame?

- Where those men whose former efforts gave them more than local fame?
- He the mainstay of the party, strong alike in nerve and name?
- Launched at last, away, God-speed them, while we all stand wondering by,
- Hovering, bird-like, now a moment, 'twixt the surging sea and sky,
- Then overwhelmed, as if for ever, swept from mortal aid and eye.
- Darker scowls the hungry storm-fiend, fiercer still his breath is blown,
- All the strength of all his legions in one rush he thunders on.
- Down goes barque and boat beneath it—all have vanished all have gone.
- No! they live, and still they struggle, fight, and, failing, fight anew,
- Till exhausted, back they bring them, they have dared but cannot do.
- Such a tide and such a tempest, help, oh! Heaven, you helpless crew.
- Back! not all, for one is missing, speak, oh! tell us where is he?
- One less hero 'mong the living, one more martyr in the sea,
- On the wreck among the strangers, never! nay, it cannot be.
- Fools of men that e'er ye did it, waging such a hopeless strife,
- Bootless all your mighty labour, nothing gained, and lost a life;
- Help, oh! God, the hapless woman that was even now a wife.
- Hark! he lives, above the tempest, comes his eerie wailing cry,
- He who feared not death for others, must be perish, must be die?
- No! he shall not, we shall save him, comes the stern and brave reply.

Seaward speeds again the lifeboat, gleams again each bending oar,

And they strive as never mortal e'er was known to strive before,

From the jaws of death they bear them safely to the sheltering shore.

Now 'tis ended, now 'tis over, all that they could win is won,

Strangers' hands are grasped by strangers, "Auld Ayr" clasps again her son,

Fame has on her record written, "Men of Coila bravely done."

## SCOTLAND FAR AWA'.

AIL, Scotland, land of mountains grand, of glens and woodlands wild,

I love her still, with all the love and ardour of a child:

Abroad, at home, where'er they roam, her sons are trig and braw,

Sae free from guile, her daughters smile, at hame or far awa'.

The spirits of their fathers still live in each hardy clan,

Her Highland lad, in Tartan clad, still battles in the van;

From every glen a thousand men will still the claymore draw,

And bleed and fight for Scotland's right, at hame or far awa'.

Then be the watchword "Scotland Yet," when danger nears her shore,

On every peak the beacon's flash will kindle as of yore,

- In every glen a thousand men will hear the martial ca'.
- And rush to fight for Scotland's right at hame or far awa'.
- Like meteors o'er the crimson ground her grey horsed heroes flew,
- When Empires in the balance hung on gory Waterloo;
- On the Pyrenees' snow-crowned heights, by Bada jozes' wa'.
- The songs they sung like anthems rung for Scotland far awa'.
- And what a gleam of hope lit up each war-bronzed hero's brow.
- When each had all but drained the cup of death in dark Lucknow,
- When Highland Jessie heard the drum and cheery bagpipes blaw.
- "They come, they come, to take us home to Scotland far awa'."
- The weary exile lays him down, his round of labour done,
- In dreams he hears his mother's voice, she clasps again her son;
- 'Mong all those loved ones crowding round, one fairer far than a'
- His fancy sees among the trees, in Scotland far awa'.
- The sun-bronzed warrior afar among the prairies wild.
- Looks longing back o'er life's broad track, he feels again a child;
- When o'er his weary, toil-worn frame the sweets of alumber fa',
- His heart returns to glens and burns in Scotland far awa'.
- Away amid the blinding drift, he dares the frozen zone.
- When hope is dead in every heart, he still keeps hoping on,

And when, perchance, he sinks him down among the Polar snaw,

He, dying, dreams of vales and streams in Scotland far awa'.

Oh, let my heart, like Bruce's, then be brought from far away,

Let the dear earth that gave me birth receive my kindred clay,

Leave marbled piles and vaulted aisles for lords and dukes an' a'.

And deck my tomb with heather's bloom in Scotland far awa'.

## TO MR EBENEZER SMITH, OF HYR.

On receiving from him, appended to a letter, impromptu verses, beginning—

"Fash not your brain too much with rhyme, Your own, or mine, or other people's."

AIL! worthy son of craft and song, in both my

The tribute from thy Kyle bred tongue I answer with another;

'Mong all our minor bards that throng—God grant they ne'er grow fewer—

I know not one more clear or strong, nor one whose notes are truer.

"Fash not your brain too much with rhyme," I don't think I could do it:

Give me the proper theme, and time, I somehow must get through it.

Foul be the tongue, foul be the pen, who dares to underrate her,

The Muse was never meant for men who fear to cultivate her.

"Fash not with rhyme," from one like you, who's life long gloried in her,

Reminds me of the proverb true, where Satan checks the sinner;

To make us young bloods sleeve the chain, her dismal deeds ye tell us,

And yet withal—I speak it plain—you merely make us jealous.

For yours and others will I go as long as I've a shilling;

But stop the Muse, by Jericho! I could not were I willing.

When sense and reason take the shelf, in doggerel barks I'll yelp it:

In fact I'm something like yourself, I sing and cannot help it.

Lang live the dame, she is not yet the syren wench you fancy,

Though I admit she's strong a bit, uncertain oft, and chancy;

But when o'er us her robe she throws there's no mistake about her,

Her faults are more the faults of those who try to sing without her.

God help the fool, who hoping gain, makes up his mind to try her,

He'll find in time no lack of pain, and little pleasure by her,

Though snubs and sneers we daily get would break a heart of metal,

She boils and bubbles in us yet like steam within a kettle.

Forsake the Muse, I'm not the man to throw her over lightly;

Since first to woo her I began she's done her duty rightly;

When gloom and care my labours cloy I solace from her borrow.

She is my balance-weight in joy, she bears me up in sorrow.

Hail! worthy son of craft and song, long may we sing together.

May friendship ever bind us strong with screeds of rhyme and leather,

With rhyme you still must fash your brain, desert her you can never,

And cheer the Auld Toun with your strain in sweeter notes than ever.

# " SHЯЕМЯКЕК, SHЯЕМЯКЕК, SHOO МЯ SHOON."

"Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon, Three bawbees and a farden in."—OLD RHYME.

GHAEMAKER, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon,
Gie him the uppers and let him begin;
Counter to quarter, and quarter to front,
Ilk steek drawn to wi' a girn and a grunt.
Lang steeks and scobbin he cares na about,
His is a seam that'll never rip oot;
Nane o' yer rubbish that wears thro' and fails,
Closer and firmer than rivets and nails,
Blin'-stab and birse till the closin' is din,
Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon.

Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon, Noo to the bottoms we'll see him begin; Shoo them wi' hemp-thread and shoo them wi' whang,

Gie us an inseam that winna gang wrang;
Pare up and pack up each corner and hole,
Lay on the hammer, and beat oot the sole;
In wi' a jirger to gar the shae squeal,
Pare up the edges, and square up the heel;
Heelshod and taghod and tacket and pin,
Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon.

Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon,
Watch him and see hoo the finishin's din;
Whiten the forefit, and blacken the back,
Rub up the edges wi' white-ball and black;
Set them wi' jigger and bruiser and wheel,
Smoother than polish and harder than steel;
Rub up and redden the heel-taps a wee,
Draw them and clean them, and what dae we see,
Boots that for brichtness micht dazzle ye blin',
Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon.

Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon,
That's what he'll no dae as lang's he has tin;
First at the whisky-shop, best at a splore,
Knicht of the mutchkin-stoup, king o' the core;
Hauf a gless mair precious far than a meal,
Up in the shoother and doon in the heel;
Up through his greasy cap growin' the hair,
Nae bumps o' knowledge or wisdom teeth there;
Leave aff the barley-bree, pit in the pin,
Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon.

Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon,
Mair's in his heid than gaed there in a spin;
Glibe as a razor, and sharp as a stab,
Weel pack'd wi' knowledge, and guid o' the gab;
Horny-haun'd, clear witted, weel-informed men,
Equally gleg wi' the awl and the pen,
Bloomfield and Gifford were kings i' their time,
Sewin' and singin' wi' rosit and rhyme;
Shoemakin' songmakin' strangely akin',
Shaemaker, shaemaker, shoo ma shoon.

# THE DEAD ONES WHOSE VOICES ARE STILL.

HAT reck we though Spring comes arrayed in her bloom,

And hedges and wildwoods are rich with perfume; What reck we for gowan-decked meadows and less, The hopes that we cherished were brighter than these.

We gaze on the future, no solace is found,
A gloom like the night seems to gather around;
There's a void in our hearts earth has nothing can fill.

We sigh for the dear ones whose voices are still.

Avaunt thee fair Summer, we want not your flowers, The joys that ye proffer can never be ours; Oh! mock not our sorrow with sunshine and smile, Go! gild with your glories some far away isle. We once loved to joy in thy splendours, but now There is woe in each bosom, and gloom on each brow; Go! bask in thy sunshine, enjoy it who will, We sigh for the dear ones whose voices are still.

Come, hallow-eyed Autumn, lank-visaged and sere, Most welcome of all in the course of the year; Gaunt phantom of ages, despoiler of earth, We welcome thee here to our desolate hearth. Grim fiend of the forest, heart-killer of all, Responsive the leaves beat with ours as they fall; In fancy they whisper by woodland and rill, A dirge for the dear ones whose voices are still.

Dark Winter, come hither, we fear not thy form, We bow not in dread at the voice of the storm; There's a surcease for sorrow, a soothing of pain, In the slow constant beat of the sleat and the rain. Alone in our dwelling, apart from mankind, We longingly list to the wail of the wind, As it moans through the key-hole portentous of ill, The names of those dear ones whose voices are still.

Thus, earth changes ever, as Time changes all,
Thus, mortal is fated to flourish and fall;
What boots it though beauty decks woodland and
burn.

When the glow of life's springtime may never return; What reck we though summer may blossom and shine,

Though Autumn may follow in sombre decline, While winter, wild winter, may rave if he will, O'er the graves of those dear ones whose voices are still.

### I. O. U.

WUNNER aft mankind's sae daft as gie themselves sic fash,

To stress an' strain baith haun' an' brain in huntin' after cash,

When mony a cuif as bare's my luif slides easyosey through,

Weel clad and fat, and a' for what ?—an I.O.U.
I.O.U., my freen's, I. O. U.—

A guid hard cheek's worth pounds a-week, Wi' I. O. U.

There's Dandy Jim, the like o' him naebody ever saw:

Awn here and there, and everywhere, he'll no pey oucht ava'.

Wi' guids and gear, frae far and near, his hoose is packit fu'.

They're easy bought—they cost him noucht but I. O. U.

I. O. U., my man, I. O. U.-It saves the fash o' ready cash, An I. O. U.

Boot shares and stocks and monied folks he talks sae frank and free,

There's scarce a chiel' on earth as weel providit for as he:

O' odds and ends and dividends he's near twa thoosand due:

Twad highly rank in ony bank his I. O. U.

I. O. U., he says, I. O. U. The simplest plan 'twixt man and man is I. O. U.

There's Peter Dick, he kens the trick, he steps about at ease:

He's far ower 'cute to finger oot without an unco squeeze.

There is na yin but what he's in, the hale braid parish through,

And a' they get to pey the debt is I. O. U. I. O. U., my freen's, I. O. U.-It's easy din, and saves the tin, An I. O. U.

If you should meet him on the street, and ask if he'll pey oot,

"Come back," he'll say, "some ither day, when my guidewife's aboot:

I've lots o' tin, could I get in, but she's frae hame the noo-

Till she comes back ye'll need to tak' my I. O. U.

I. O. U." he'll say, "I. O. U.-I've no a plack till she comes back, That I. O. U."

There's Tam M'Turk, he will not work, yet, what seems queer to me,

There no a loon in a' the toon gets fou' as aft as he.

He ticks his grub, and cheats the "pub,' he cares na' when or hoo,

And, if they crave, they, like the lave, get I. O. U.
I. O. U., my freen's, I. O. U.—
Where cash is scant it fills the want,
An I. O. U.

Tam did it yince ower aft, and since they lashed him wi' the law

He's no sae quick to slope and tick—he kens a thing or twa;

When like a cloot they lat him oot, his twa 'ears' labour through,

He never said they wad be paid wi' I. O. U.
I. O. U. my man, I. O. U.—

Na, faith, he kens mair common sense Than I. O. U.

## THE DOMINIE'S DEAD.

And slippet the Maister, douce body, awa,
Though no muckle thooht o' ootside his ain hame,
Thae'll be sair hearts to sorrow aboot him the same;
The sohule-weans have got it, and sic an uproar,
Nane's wa-gain' was e'er made sae much o' afore,
It rings through the parish wi' telegraph speed,
Nae lessons nor licks noo, the Dominie's deid.

Wee Rab frae Glenconner comes leadin' the squad, Hurrahin' like thun'er and jumpin' like mad, Sic cause for rejoicin' they'e no had this while, Since the young laird was merrit twa 'ear come April;

Wee silly Sam Soorley comes hindmaist alang, And he's croonin' awa at a canny bit sang, But the sense o't ye canna mak' tail o' or heid, A' ye hear is the ower-word, the Dominie's deid.

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Ill Jock frae the smiddy is egg-fu' o' glee,
Few folk had less love for the Maister than he.
Never saw I Jock's equal for capers and tricks,
Losh, I min' the last time he was up for his licks,
Hoo he whupped back his haun in the blink o' an e'e,
And the cane cam' doon slap on the Dominie's knee.
While Jock took to the door for't wi' nae canny
speed.

And he's jist as weel pleased noo the Dominie's deid.

The Minister meets him and keeks thro' his gless,
And speirs him hoo far he is up in his cless.
Jock never has far for an answer to seek,
"I hae been second heids, sir, for mair than a week;"
"And how many, my lad, in yer class may there be?"
"Jist twa," replied Jock, "Jamie Blackwood and
me.

But it's nae maitter noo whase the fit or the heid, For there'll be nae mair schulein, the Dominie's deid,"

Tea Tam hears the news o't, and fents clean awa, He has ticket the Maister a saxpence or twa, Then he cries a' his micht to his betterhauf, Meg, "Rin ye aff to the schule-hoose as fast's ye can leg, Don't taigle nor speak to a leevin ye meet, For if Jen's got the siller we're done for complete, She wad jist as soon pairt wi' the hair o' her head, As pey up ae broon maik noo the Dominie's deid."

## THE HULD YEAR'S WA'-GAUN.

HE Auld Year was sittin' her wearyfu' lane,
The cauld snaw was flittin' ower hillside and
plain,

The win's weary mane was sae mournfu' and drear, And its eerie refrain was "Ye canna bide here;"

While auld Time frae his nag swung his lang willie wag.

Wi' a slow, steady swag, singin' aye in her

"The auld maun wear through and mak' room for the new;

A' oor days are but few, and we canna bide here."

Aftentimes had she quarrell'd, and raised sair strife and din,

Wi' the "Man o' the Warld," wha cam' noo stumpin' in.

"Ah," quo' he, "my auld woman, yer banes ye maun steer;

There's a braw New Year comin', ye canna bide here.

It is twal months this nicht since ye cam' to cor door.

A' the warld to mak' bricht as it ne'er was afore; But the snaw lies as deep, and the win' blaws as drear,

And life's brae is as steep, and ye canna bide here.

But I'm laith to cast oot sic a faithfu' auld crone, Ye micht stey, but I doot ye'd na gree nor get on."
"What, stey and mak' wey for a young wife? nae faar.

I'll be heid wife, or deid wife, I winns bide here.

"Ay, it's twal months atweel since I cam', and ye ken

If ye've kept true and leal a' the vows ye made then:

It was bring bells, and ring bells, wi' guidwill and cheer,

Noo it's steer oot, and clear oot, ye canna bide here.

"Sae bring yer braw queen o' the year that's to be, Let me look wi' my e'en on her face ere I dee;

Where I'm gaun to the noo she maun come in a year.

For her time will wear through, and she canna bide here.

"But think na, warld-man, ye'll be less like to fa' When cauld death's clammy han' tak's yer Auld Year awa'.

For although in life's glow, like the noon ye appear, Ere the nicht comes, the blicht comes, ye canna bide here.

Though I'm auld, blin', and lame, and I'm gaun awa' hame,

I've a guid word the same to speak into yer ear;

Pey the Auld Year her due ere ye deal wi' the New,

For yer ain days are few, and ye canna bide here."

### A ROOK.

FOOL! beware the bitter words, oh! keep them from the young,

For more than king is he who guards the temper and the tongue:

Let not your lips send out the sound, for keen the heart can feel,

A single word can make a wound a lifetime cannot heal:

Yet oft the eager words will out, past all restraint and rule:

Wise should he be, beyond a doubt, who calls another fool.

Beware, old man! thy time is short, thy world is wearing through.

The vile and venomous retort would sound but ill from you.

All honour to the aged, whose sands of life are all but run—

Age at all times respect commands, wer't but for that alone;

But when his eye with anger gleams, and passion has the pull,

The hoary head it ill beseems to call another fool.

Go slandering words! their cowardly use no cause can justify,

And after all his vile abuse, what gains a man thereby?

At best they only serve so far as show their poisoned source,

The slander on the slanderer recoils with double force:

His foul assertion, foully thrown, betrays his vulgar school;

A fig for the esteem of one who calls another fool.

I ask not such, I want not such, I scorn it all forthwith,

His censure cannot harm me much, his favours are a myth;

His haughty look and seornful frown are spent on me in vain.

I can afford to laugh them down, they shall not bring me stain,

I care not who the case may scan, in after moments cool,

Must doubt the wisdom of the man who calls another fool.

# THE DOMINIE'S WIKE HAS A WEAN.

N the min' o' the auldest, nae wean was e'er

That caused sic a steer in the clachan o' Sorn— What's wrang wi' the schule-weans, can naebody say?

My certy, there's something by orner adae—
A something that's put them in unco guid win';
A something that's nice if we judge by their din,
The reason o't a' is na ill to explain—
The dominie's wife has gotten a wean.

Unco pleased wi' the maiter is wee Geordie Graham— Aye the last in the schule, aye the first to come hame,

Hauf a 'ear o' the schule wi' its hard and fast rules, He wad swap ony day for an oor at the bools; Wee Willie M'Whud meets his grannie and speirs, Wi' a knowledge that's awfu' for yin o' his 'ears, Hoo mony days schulin' there micht be again, Ere the dominie's wife gets anither bit wean. There that idiot callan, Daft Davy Dilap,
Wha had never ae grain o' soun' sense in his tap,
Wha's nose it tak's nae eagle's een to perceive,

Has been gey weel acqua'nt wi' his auld jacket
sleeve.

But a change has com' ower him, the wee' witless man,

A' at yince efter knowledge to seek he's began; And he'll no rest contented till some yin explain Where the Dominie's wife got this wonderfu' wean.

Quo' the Parson to wee Rabbie Ronald sae sleek,
"I suppose," Rab, "ye'd like she had yin in the
week?"

"The week!" replied Rab, while his heid got a claw.

"Man! a wean in the week wad be naething ava; They may gang to the wean in the week-schule wha may,

Let me gang to the place where it's yin every day; About lessons and luifies I'll never complain If the Dominie's wife every day has a wean."

# NAEBODY'S SOBER BUT ME.

Y, Tibby, I'm here, though a sair fecht I've

And I wadna for worlds gang the same gate again, Had I been like some fules wha tak drink and get fou.

It's as likely as no I'd hae never cam' through; Frae the head o' the howe to oor ain vera door, I ne'er saw the toun in sic turmoil afore, A' turned tapsalteerie and twisted agee, No a man, wife, or wean in't a' sober but me.

But gudeness be thankit, I'm here safe and soun',
For faith there'll be news o' this nicht in the toun,
The very cab horses are fuddled complete;
They are whiles on the plainstanes, and whiles on
the street.

Comin' doun the auld Vennel the pavement jamp up, And right on my poor nose it landed a whup; Then a drunken lamp-post gar'd my bannet play flee, Twad be tellin' them a' were they sober like me.

There I met Rab the coalman gaun stoitterin' hame, His donkey was drunk, and his doug was the same, His auld cuddy-cairt had a far-awa' soun', As wheel it was square and the ither yin round'; And yer ain vera cousin, lang Tam M'Kervail, I met him there leadin' his horse by the tail, And 'twas vera weel seen he'd a drap in his e'e, Oh, it's awful to see sae few sober like me.

The mune, which for ages has shone frae abune, Noo shines on the earth frae the depths o' the linn, And that pimple-faced yill-seller, Sam Mucklesoo, Has made yer fine kirk a big whisky shop noo; The parson's as fou' as a piper himsel', And he's dancing a jig to the ten o'clock bell, And the capers he's cuttin' are waefu' to see, Ah! Tibb, lass ye're blessed wi' yin sober like me. Sic a throughither nicht in this toun I ne'er saw,

Sic a throughither nicht in this toun I ne'er saw,
The Bobbies are drunk, and the Bailies and a',
And there's folks on the roofs where the lums used
to be,

Thrang throwin' down slates at a' bodies they see;
There the vera toun pump oried me ower to partake,
And held out his han' as I left him to shake,
But I gied him the slip, I could vera weel see,
That he wasna a chum for yin sober like me.

## HUMAN LIFE

TUMAN life is a tide, heaving wildly and wide
Tiny barks on its breast are we all,
From the hour of our birth till we mix with the earth,
Tossed by many a billow and squall.
Only those who are true to their trust may live
through:

Only they who are earnest prevail; Only they who fight strong against evil and wrong Will triumphantly weather the gale.

Human life is a sea, surging, ceaseless and free,
'Gainst the shores of eternity vast;
Where, when doubts gather dark, the lone voyager's
bark

Is overwhelmed by the flood and the blast;
From whose far depths beneath gleam the bleached
bones in death

Of those faint hearts whose fears made them fail; But the fearless in fight, in the strength of their might,

Have triumphantly weathered the gale.

Human life is a trip, which mortality's ship
From the first has been fated to go;
How far, or how fast, or how long it may last,
Is a thing that we never can know;
Where the glare and the gloss and the tinsel and

Of the world can but little avail
Only they who have stood and held fast to the good
Will triumphantly weather the gale.

Human life is a race, let us strive for a place In the front 'mong the brave-hearted few; If we try, if we trust, gain a laurel we must, When the long-wished for goal comes in view. When the breakers are past, and we've anchored at last,

And have pulled down our storm-battered sail, In that haven of peace all our sorrows shall cease— We've triumphantly weathered the gale.

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# NAETHING.

HEN I was a schule wean, hard-headed and

Wi' ten tears in my trousers for yin in my e'e, When I beetled a bigger boy up the schule brae, What gar'd ye lick Tam for? the maister wad say;

But I ne'er had dune naething, A' that Tam got was naething To what he'd get yet if we yince were out by.

When I was man muckle, and coortin' our Nell, I vowed I'd propose to her aft to mysel'; Nae maiter hoo lang by her side I micht sit; My courage aye failed when it cam' to the bit;

Though I aye thocht on ae thing, I sat and said naething.

'Twas ower cheeky a business for yin sic as I.

We had never been merrit in mercy, I trow, Had oor faithers and mithers no ta'en us in tow. So they met and discussed it-each pair had their sav.

And arranged for the waddin' the oor, and the day, While we stood and said naething-We lauched and said naething: Nell seemed unco pleased, and of course sae was I.

Losh! I shook in my shoon like the leaf o' a tree. When the minister cam' to unite us, said he, "Will ye tak' yin anither for husband and wife, To be faithful and true a' the days o' yer life?" But we stood and said naething-

We looked and said naething; But the minister kent we baith meant to say ay.

### WEE DAYY DYFE.

IFE'S nae pleasure here I'm shair,

Aff my knee and on the flair,

Fifty times the day and mair,

Losh! he'll ding me gyte,

Wark! I canna get it dune,

Everything has faun ahin',

Dad 'll glower when he comes in,

Wee Davy Dyte.

Near the fire I canna get,
Od he'll get a warmin' yet,
Doun my fit I daurna set
For the crawlin' mite.
Oot my gait he winna come,
Covered ower wi' soot and gum,
Crying "John come doun the lum"
To wee Davy Dyte.

There he goes, the fearless loon,
Spinnin' like a peerie roun';
Guid preserve us a'! he's doun'
Wi' an unco clyte,
Greetin' mair wi' fright than pain;
Come awa, my kill'd wee wean,
To yer mither's knee again,
Wee Davy Dyte.

What! anither teethie through;
Open up yer cherry[mou'
Let me see how mony noo
Ye hae got tae bite.
There's a bowsey at yer snoot,
Let me at it wi' a cloot,
Haud ye till I get it oot,
Wee Davie Dyte.

### 134 MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

See him noo, the steerin' limb,
Trying up the chair to sklim,
Little odds it's mak's to him
Hoo I rage and flyte,
Dod! the perseverin' wicht,
He'll be up afore he's richt,
Though it keeps him there till nicht,
Wee Davy Dyte.

Hear him hoo he's crawin' noo;
Losh! my bairn, I'm pleased wi' you,
That the wey ye'll warsal through,
And wear a baille's kite.
When the gruesome cup I've preed,
In the kirkyard cauld and dead,
Honoured age will croon the heid
O' wee Davy Dyte.

## THE POET'S FUNERAL.

(James Macfarlane, born April 9th, 1832, died November 6th, 1862.)

WAS a cold damp day with a dizzling rain,
And a wind that in weird gusts blew,
As out from the gloom of the mudstained lane,
We bore him a faithful few.

No dirge for the dead o'er his dust was rung,
As we moved on our silent way,
A dark dull haze o'er the great town hung,
And a mist on the far hills lay.

And the fairest dames and the stateliest men, Stood and gazed with a curious eye At our humble band, but they knew not then That we carried a dead king by.

From a pitiless world that was stern and cold,
That could kill with its scorn and sneer,
We lowered him down to his kindred mould,
And we gave him a parting tear.

When, lo! overhead came a flame and a crash,
Made the old earth throb and reel,
'Twas the glance of God's eye in the lightning's flash,
And His voice in the thunder's peal.

And the misty veil for a space was rent,
And the sun lit up spire and dome,
'Twas a volley from Heaven's artillery sent
To welcome their soldier home.

Gone the matchless mind, gone the wond'rous tongue,

Gone the strange wild wandering will, But the glorious strains which he wrote and sung Are lark-like soaring still.

# тне мян о тне мине.

Past seven, guid save us, the clock's run awa',
The fire's black cot, and the parrich no on,
My feth, but we'll hear o' this mornin' frae John;
And wha's that on the stair makin' sic an uproar,
It's that deil o' a milk laddie kickin' the door,
And to tell him to stop, wad but deepen his din
For I micht as weel speak to the Man o' the Mune.

Efter lettin' John oot at the sax o'clock bell, I jist slippet back for a wink by mysel', The morn was so cheerless, so cauld, and so dour; Noo wha wad hae thoucht it, I've sleepit an 'oor. There's the bell in the lobby, losh what can it mean It's the boy wi' the butter I trysted yestreen, And he'll pu' oot the bell if I don't let him in, Ay, I micht as weel speak to the Man o' the Mune.

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There's the weans, what a raft o' heart-breakin' wee loons,

Comin' prancin' and jumpin' like fifty dragoons, A' are oot o' their warm beds and dancin' aroon', Afore I've had time to get into my gown, Waur weans in the clachan I'm sure canna' be, Was there ever a puir woman plagued like me; Like a perfect schule scalin' aroon' me they rin, And I micht as weel speak to the Man o' the Mune.

Tak' the hills in a hurry ye noisy wee crew,
The nine o'clock bell will be ringin' the noo,
And unless I have a' things made tidy and clean,
They'll be shines wi' yer faither, and that'll be seen,
Though guid kens since he's had a bit hoose o' his ain,
No a man in the town has less need to complain;
But l'm claverin' on, and there's naebody in,
Losh! I michtas weel speak to the Man o' the Mune.

# JERUSALEM.

AMMY TWEEZER was aye a queer cove in his wey,

For the bairns there was ne'er sic a handy man,
No a leevin' could be made so much o' as he,
The douce-decent-dirty-faced candy man,
He'd a mooth like a pit, and a haun' like a fit,
'Twad hae taen a fell fallow to tousel 'im,
As he cam' frac the Haggs, cryin', "Hey banes and
rags."

With his auld cuddy-cairt and Jerusalem.

Losh! I min' when Rab Black got a ride on his back, He had vowed gin they gied him the chance wi''em, If he yince got weel up wi' a stick or a whup,

He wad let the hale toon see a dance wi? 'im,
On his back wad he stick let him caper and kick,
Till the beast was as auld as Methusalem,
But he found to his cost that in makin' the boast,
He had never consulted Jerusalem.

Wi' a leg doon each side he got duly astride,
But wass me for our luckless pedestrian,
Ae bit pitch was enough dooble quick to the shuch,
Heels ower heids gaed our would-be equestrian,
He's a back like a spring board a rale heel-and-fling
board.

The best trained circus jockey confuse he'll 'im, Noucht ava ye'll be seein' but turfs and stoor fleein', When they've yince tried their leg ower Jerusalem.

The last yin that tried 'im the cuddy skye highed 'im,
He for yince in his life made a bird o' 'im,
Like the missin' balloon he has never come doon,
At least if he has we've no heard o' 'im,
Tak' a lesson thereby to let sleepin' dougs lie,
A cuddy ne'er try to bambozzle 'im,

Or else ye, like Rab, in the dyke-shuch may lab, Sent to Jericho quick by Jerusalem.

## THE COMPLHININ' WIFE.

N awful wife is Jock M'Lean's, a thrawn illnatured carlin',

For ever girnin' wi' the weans, or wi' the neebours quarrelin',

If things get loose in her bit hoose, its no for want o' trainin',

Frae early licht till late at nicht, she's never din complainin'.

Her lang faced visage sharp and sour, mak's everywhere a clearance,

The vera cats gang aff like stour, when she mak's her appearance,

A merrit wife's a weary life, she has been sairly ta'en in.

Yet shair as death she'll gie her aith, she's never heard complainin'.

Wi' everthing ablow, abune, defects she's always findin'.

She argues wi' the vera win' and gies it aft a windin', She bleaches on the droothy days, and drys when it is rainin',

Yet aye she hechs and howes! and says, she's never heard complainin'.

Men never seem to care or think, what woes may kill or cure yin,

A guid gaun pipe and lots o' drink, is "Man's chief en'" wi' oor yin,

He glumphs and sumphs, and growls about no ae broon bawbee gainin',

While me I drudge baith in and oot, there's no use o' complainin',

Noo min' yer steps the mat is there, and watch ye what ye spit on.

Ye never care a preen's worth where ye pat yer dirty fit on,

And siccan feet wi' clay and weet, they're likes ye had been drainin',

Were some wifes here, I doot and fear, they'd oft be heard complainin'.

l'Il grant ye Mag's a tarter, yet she's jist like mony anither,

And sairly tried at times to get the twa en's brought thegether,

Where want and poverty are rife, with little hope remainin',

Nae wonder that the toilworn wife is often heard complainin'.

# A YEAR'S PILERIMAGE.

HE midnight bells were tolling slow, the wind was piercing cold,

A slivery sheet of burnished snow was spread o'er wood and wold,

Around the crackling Yule logs flame mankind had gathered near,

To greet with joy and glad acclaim the rosy newborn year.

But scarce had ceased the welcome chime for her the year to be

When spoke the stern old guardian Time, arise and follow me.

The sun will soon be rising clear above you mountain's brow,

Our journey's end is far from here, we cannot tarry now.

Away he strode, she followed on, a girlish, guileless thing,

Through vales that rich with verdure shone beneath the smile of spring,

Through many a glen and snug retreat that gay with blossoms hung,

Through many a wooded glade where sweet the voice of Nature sung;
While from the far off dreamy hills in murmurings

soft and clear,

The music of a thousand rills came to her listening ear;

"Oh, may I linger here," she said, "and wreath with flowers my brow?"

The stern old guardian shook his head, "Ye cannot tarry now."

When summer verdured wild, and wood with Nature's richest dower,

Robed in her glorious womanhood she seemed the fairest flower;

From high o'erhead the red sun flung a scorching radiance down,

A dreamy, listless langour hung o'er country cot and town.

Still on they sped through many a glade that thronged with birds and bees,

How sweet to linger, thought the maid, among those sheltering trees.

"Oh! may I linger here," she sighed, "and cool my throbbing brow?"

"Ah! no," the hoary guide replied, "ye cannot tarry now."

Unfaltering still the old man sped, and still she followed on,

The summer's golden glow had fled, the blossoms all were gone,

With weary steps the sons of men were gathering home the sheaves,

While every glade and every glen were strewn with withered leaves.

Decay and death had left their trace around them everywhere,

And many a dear and loved one's face peered from those dead leaves there.

"In sorrow o'er those friends," she said, "my head I fain would bow."

"Ah! no," the stern-eyed guardian said, "ye cannot tarry now."

Grey autumn passed, grim winter came, lankvisaged, bleak, and drear,

A tottering, broken, worn-out dame was now the once bright year;

Though sore her toil upon her pressed she cared not now to stay,

No more she yearned her limbs to rest, or linger by the way, In silence still she followed fate on to life's outmost wall,

And reached at length the time-worn gate as night began to fall.

The old man turned his aged head, a cloud was on his brow—

"This is the gate of Death," he said, "and you must enter now,"

## BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

# RHYMES AND READINGS.

2s 6d, Post Free.

#### OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

Literary Notes, Daily Mail.

A genuine humorist has just added a volume to the poetical literature of the West of Scotland. "Rhymes and Readings" is a book that deserves a place on the same shelf with Sandy Rodger. Dr Rankine's favourable estimate of his old pupil's writings is amply sustained by the poems to which it is prefixed. They display a remarkable variety in thought and feeling as well as versification. Mr Aitken is a master of simple pathos, as is proved by his "Found on the Street" and "Fallen," poems that touch the spring of tears. Not a few of his pieces have the genuine lyrical cry, and hardly need to be set to music, but some of his happiest efforts are those in which he delineates the humorous aspects of the life with which he is most familiar. And his "Chronicles of the Clachan," form a gallery of portraits drawn with infinite humour. We can fancy the emigrant from the banks of the Ayr, reading Mr Aitken's poems on the other side of the globe with intense delight.

## People's Journal.

"Rhymes and Readings" are the productions of a young man who woos the Muse as a pastime, and possess merits considerably superior to those of the ordinary run of amateur poetical productions. They are characterised by a liveliness of fancy, a richness of humour, and a vigour of expression rarely to be met with in similar publications. Mr Aitken is no mere rhymster—there are plenty of such now-a-days—but a true poet who can "look through Nature up to Nature's God." Some of his readings are very laughable. In the "Chronicles of the Clachan," he draws some capable sketches of those odd eccentric characters who are seldom wanting in rural parishes, while his songs show that he is fitted to excel in the difficult art of lyrical poetry. In everything the volume is most excellent, and will be read with pleasure by all lovers of good poetry,

#### Scotsman.

"Rhymes and Readings" is a volume by a Railway Inspector, and the book unquestionably proves that what little leisure such an occupation affords has, in his case, been well spent. It is a collection of poems, lyric, narrative, descriptive, humorous, and pathetic. Most of them, and perhaps the best of them, are in the Scotch dialect, but all very well worth reading. There is a straightforward simplicity about Mr Aitken's verse, an absence of all pretence to high-strung emotion, that is positively refreshing. Then his humour is genuine, and he evidently has a good perception of rhythm, for there is scarcely a halting line in his whole volume.

### Aur Advertiser.

It is seldom that we come across a volume of the kind that has more in itself to command attention. The author does not aim at the highest flights, but the reader has the feeling that he is ever equal to what he attempts, and that he has a sustained power that prevents that drooping of wings and painful collapse that often distinguish the productions of young poets. He has evidently aimed more at finish in style than at giving proofs of prolific power, and the result is that there is not a page of the volume that can be said to be wasted. A number of the pieces are in homely Scotch Doric, of which the author has a good command, but perhaps the best specimens are those in modern English, which he employs with taste and nice discrimination. His rhymes are varied and musical. He possesses not a little of the humorous faculty, but his poems commend themselves most strongly to the heart by a tenderness of sentiment and sweetness of fancy which pervade them.

### Dumfries and Galloway Standard.

Most of these poems are written in the Scottish dialect, with which the author seems to be thoroughly conversant, but he can compose in good English too, and that with no small amount of success. It is really creditable to the industry as well as to the force of the author that he has been able during his exactive life as Railway Inspector to produce so many pieces of merit as we find embodied in the volume. The best of them we think are those that make up the "Chronicles of the Clachan," in which the scenes and worthies of a west country hamlet are graphically described. In a capital poem, Mr Aitken celebrates the recent unveiling of the Burns' Statue at Kilmarnock, the closing stanza of which conveys a reproach to Dumfries which will soon be wiped away.

### Greenock Telegraph.

Had John Galt, author of the "Annals of the Parish," been alive to-day, he would have given William Aitken a cordial welcome as a genuine humourist and a true poet. The poems speak for themselves. They are evidently the spontaneous productions of a mind that is possessed of the divine afflatus. There is nothing forced or artificial in this little volume. Its author manifestly could not refrain from He strikes a harp that is all his own, and hence we are compelled to listen. Some of the notes are tender and pathetic. as in "The Motherless Home," "Fallen," and kindred pieces, but the prevailing tone is humorous. Whether grave or gay, the singer is always natural, and the sentiment flowing from the heart does not fail to make its way to the heart. Mr Aitken is not a mocking bird like so many of the fashionable so-called poets of our day, and the themes that engage his Muse are never far-fetched or unreal. The village scenes and characters familiar to him in early days are reproduced in graphic pictorial form. Some of the poems in "Chronicles of the Clachan," are equal to the best things in the same line that we have received from Robert Nichol and Sandy Rodger. Among the recent minstrels of our West Country, and especially of the Land of Burns, he is entitled to a foremost place among the humourists, though in saying this, we must not be understood as suggesting that he occupies an inferior position as a writer of serious verse. On the contrary, not a few of his most striking productions give fitting expression to religious and moral sentiments, and he is never more completely at home than in the delineation of the domestic affections, while at times there is an almost tragic power in his more sombre pieces, such as "A Lay of the Line," "The Brewer's Bridal," and "Found on the Street." Indeed, the versatility of Mr Aitken is a prominent characteristic of his genius, and the rich variety in the form of his verse is only an accurate reflection of his wealth of thought and emotion. Should he persevere in the sedulous cultivation of his gift, he may yet take high rank among the poets of Scotland.

### People's Friend.

His readings are very felicitous examples of humorous versification, and should serve to keep any audience in good humour. The "Chronicles of the Clachan" depict with much pawky drollery the queer characters of an Ayrshire village. They are capital sketches of character, and show that the author has a forcible pen and a felicity of diction and rhyme that enable him to limn with spirit, and to be funny without either becoming vulgar or ill-natured. The volume is altogether a creditable production.

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#### Aur Observer.

The author of this very pretty volume is a country man, one of the people, and his poetic faculty has been nursed and fostered by passing his youthful years near to the picturesque village of Sorn, where the River Ayr begins to wind within banks and braes of surpassing loveliness, and which, with its many romantic tributaries, renders the place in very truth a "meet nurse for a poetic child." His feelings and affections are truly and highly poetic, though still of a homely kind. He can paint Nature with power and correctness, and while he can tickle to laughter by his humour, he can also melt the heart by his genuine touches of tenderness.

#### Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald.

Although his daily round of duty lies in the heart of the great city, the imaginative faculty is wont to flash out from the din and the roar and the rattle of the excited platform of fast life to the quiet scenery of his own sweet little village. The result of this we have now before us in a miscellaneous collection of poetry on local subjects of more than ordinary merit. In each department there are pieces of much excellence. To a descriptive power of no mean order, Mr Aitken adds a vein of rich humour, and he has been eminently successful in photographing many of the scenes and characters that are so noteworthy in and around every country village.

#### Railway Fly Sheet.

Mr William Aitken has special gifts which he has been in the habit of cultivating. Among them are clear vision, a fine feeling of rhythm, a playful fancy, and a deep pathos. We like his Scottish poetry best. His command of the vernacular is copious, and his rhymes to uncouth Scotticisms are exceedingly happy.

### Ayrshire Weekly News.

Mr Aitken has an intense love of nature, and in the volume before us he presents some pretty word-pictures which cannot fail to be appreciated, especially by those who know the locality he so well describes. In the various moods, grave as well as gay, the author displays considerable power, but the humorous element predominates throughout the volume, and as this species of verse is getting somewhat scarce, Mr Aitken's humorous sallies are sure to be highly relished.

### Weekly Mail.

The predominating feature of the book is a freegoing, but perfectly healthy humour, which enlivens almost every page. The author is realistic and sensible, both in the selection and treatment of his subjects. The opening piece "The Haunted Carret" is a poem of homely and quite delightful humour, and the remark applies with equal truth to at least a score of similar poems in the book.

#### Hamilton Advertiser.

Lively descriptions of village scenes and character. He is a humourist of a pleasant kind, and the present volume is highly creditable to his diligence and perseverance.

#### Kilmarnock Standard.

In his "Chronicles of the Clachan," he presents to the reader a series of lively pen-and-ink sketches of the "auld farrant worthies" of his native village, several of which evince considerable power of observation and perception of character, as well as the possession of a fund of pawky Scotch humour.

Recent and Living Scottish Poets by Alexander G. Murdoch.

Estimating Mr Aitken as a poet, the first characteristic that strikes the mind is his broad and hearty humour which never fails him, his quick working fancy, and his general facility and promptitude of execution. He is a born humourist, and will be best appreciated as such. He is a man of first-rate character, who has the sense to subordinate his attachment to the Muse to the more important concerns of every-day life. His brain is quick of thought and fancy, and prolific of produce, and he is likely to still further enrich the fast accumulating stores of local dialect poetry.

